UNDER THE CRUST

THOMAS NELSON PAGE

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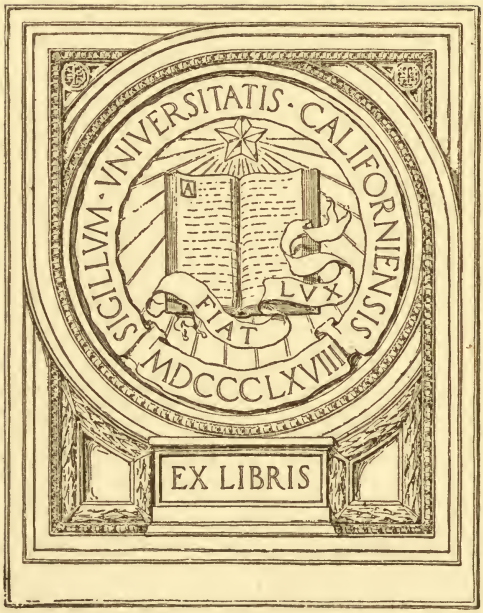
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UNDER THE CRUST

"I don't play with children," he said scornfully.

UNDER THE CRUST

BY

THOMAS NELSON PAGE

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MISS GODWIN'S INHERITANCE

MISS GODWIN'S INHERITANCE

I

WHEN my cousin Hortensia asked me one evening in the middle of winter to go with her the following week to look at a "summer place" for her on the Maine coast, it crossed my mind for a moment that she was slightly mad; but the glance that I gave her as she sat in her rocking-chair, just out of the tempered light of the reading-lamp, with her dainty gray skirts spread about her and the firelight flickering on her calm features and white hands as she plied her needlework, showed nothing to warrant my suspicion. Only the time was midwinter, the hour was nine o'clock in the evening, and even the tight windows and the heavy silken curtains drawn close could not shut out the sound of the driving sleet that had been falling all the evening.

I knew my cousin well; knew that notwithstanding her Quaker blood and quiet ways she was, as an

old neighbor had long since aptly said of her, "a woman of her own head," and that she had during her married life enjoyed the full confidence of her husband, her senior by some years, and one of the strong members of the bar, and had always borne with notable success her full share of the exactions of a large establishment and a distinguished position. I knew further, that since her husband's death she had ably carried on his charitable work and maintained her position as one of the leaders, not of society, but of everything else that was good and lofty and dignified. So I put aside the thought that first sprang into my mind and declared my readiness to go with her anywhere and at any time that she might wish.

"But why on earth do you select that particular spot and this particular time to look at a country place?" I demanded.

The question evidently appeared apt to her, and she gave one of her little chuckles of pleasure which had just enough of the silvery sound to hall-mark it a laugh. Folding her hands for a moment in a way which she had either inherited from the portrait of

her Quakeress grandmother, on her dining-room wall, or which she had learned by practice to make so perfect that it was the exact representation of that somewhat supercilious but elegant old dame's easy attitude, she said:

"For the best reason in the world, my dear John! Simply—*because*."

This ended it for the moment, but a little later, having, as I suppose, enjoyed my mystification sufficiently, she began to give her reasons. In the first place, she was "completely worn out" with the exactions of the social life which she had found gathering about her more and more closely.

"I feel so tired all the time—so dissatisfied," she said, with a certain lassitude quite unusual with her. "I cannot stand the drain of this life any longer. My heart——"

"Your heart! Well, your heart is all right—that I will swear," I interjected.

"Don't be frivolous. My heart is my trouble at present." She gave a nod of mock severity. "I consulted a doctor and he told me to go to some European watering place ending in 'heim'; but I

know better than that. It is 'heim' that I want, but it is an American 'heim,' and I am going to find it on this side the water. Like that Shunamitish woman, 'I dwell among mine own people.'"

"She was ever one of my favorites," I ventured; "but what is the matter with this 'heim'?" I gazed about the luxurious apartment where Taste had been handmaid to Wealth in every appointment.

She shook her head wearily.

"I am so tired of this strenuous life that I feel that if I do not get out of it and go back to something that is calm and natural I shall die. It is all so hollow and unreal. Why, we are all trying to do the same thing and all trying to think the same thing, or, at least, say the same thing. We do not think at all. Scores of women come pouring into my house on my "days" and pour out again, content only to say they have left cards on my table, and then if I do not leave cards on their tables they all think I am rude and put on airs because I live in a big house. Forty women called here to-day, and thirty-nine of them said precisely the same thing. I must get out of it."

"What was it?"

"*Nothing.*" Her face lit up with the smile which always made her look so charming, and of which some one had once said: "Mrs. Davison is not precisely a pretty woman, but her smile is an enchantment."

"And what did you say to them?"

"I gave them the exact equivalent—*nothing.* I must get out. My husband once said that the most dreadful thing on earth was a worldly old woman."

"You are neither worldly nor old," I protested.

She gazed at me calmly.

"I am getting to be both. I am past forty, and when a woman is past forty she is dependent on two things—her goodness and her intellect. I have lost the one and am in danger of losing the other. I want to go where I can preserve the few remnants I have left. And now," she added, with a sudden return of her vivacity, which was always like a flash of April sunlight even when the clouds were lowest, "I have sent for you this evening to show you the highest proof of my confidence. I wish to ask your advice, and I want you to give the best

you have. But I do not want you to think I am going to take it, for I am not."

"Well, that is frank at any rate," I said. "We shall, at least, start fair and not be by the way of being deceived."

"Yes, I want it; it will help me to clarify my ideas—to arrive at my own conclusions. I shall know better what I do *not* want."

She gazed at me serenely from under her long eyelashes.

"Flattering, at least! How many houses do you suppose I build on those terms? And now one question before I agree. Why do you want to take a place which is, so to speak, nowhere—that is, as you tell me, several miles from anywhere?"

"Just for that reason—I want to get back to first principles, and I understand that the place I have in mind was one of the most beautiful old homes in all New England. It has trees on it that were celebrated a century ago, and a garden that is historical. Family-trees can be made easy enough; but only Omnipotence can make a real tree, and the first work of the Creator was to plant a garden."

"Oh! well, then, I give in. If there is a garden." For my cousin's love for flowers was a passion. Her name, Hortensia, was an inspiration or a prophecy. She could have made Aaron's rod bud.

"There is one other reason that I have not told you," she added, after a pause.

"There always is," I observed, half cynically; for I was not so pleased as I pretended with her flatly notifying me that my advice went for nothing.

She nodded.

"My grandfather and the owner of the old place used to be great friends, and my grandfather always said it was one of the loveliest spots on earth: 'A pleasant seat,' he called it. I think he had a little love affair there once with the daughter of the house. My grandmother was always rather scornful about it."

II

A WEEK later we landed about mid-day at the little station just outside of the village where my cousin, with her usual prevision, had arranged to have a two-horse sleigh meet us. Unfortunately, the day before, a snow of two feet had added to the

two feet which already lay on the ground and the track outside of town had not been broken. The day, however, was one of those perfect winter days which come from time to time in northern latitudes when the atmosphere has been cleared; the winds, having done their work have been laid, and Nature, having arrayed herself in immaculate garb, seems well content to rest and survey her work. The sunshine was like a jewel. The white earth sparkled with a myriad myriads of diamonds.

The man to whom my cousin had written, Mr. Silas Freeman, was on the platform to meet us. A tall, lank person with a quiet face, a keen nose, and an indifferent manner. Bundled in a buffalo-robe coat he stood on the platform and gazed at us in a reposeful manner as we descended from the train. We passed him twice without his speaking to us, though his eyes were on us with mild and somewhat humorous curiosity. When, in response to my inquiries, the station agent had pointed him out, I walked up and asked if he were Mr. Freeman, he answered briefly: "I be. That's my name."

I introduced Mrs. Davison, and he extended his

hand in its large fur glove indifferently, while a glance suddenly shot from his quiet eyes, keen, curious, and inspective. She instantly took up the running, and did so with such knowledge of the conditions, such clearness and resolution, and withal with such tact, that Mr. Freeman's calm face changed from granite to something rather softer, and his eyes began to light up with an expression quite like interest.

"No, he hadn't brought the sleigh, 's he didn't know 's she'd come, seein' 's the weather w'z so unlikely."

"But didn't I write you I was coming?" demanded Mrs. Davison.

"Waal, yes. But you city folks sometimes writes more t'n you come."

Mrs. Davison cast her eye in my direction.

"You see there!—he knows them." She turned back to Freeman. "But I am not one of the 'city folks.' I was brought up in the country."

Mr. Freeman blinked with something between incredulity and mild interest.

"Well, you'll know better next time," continued

my cousin. "Now remember, the next time I write, I am coming—if I do not, you look in the papers and see what I died of."

Whether it was the words or the laugh that went with them and changed them from a complaint to a jest, Mr. Freeman's solemnity relaxed, and he drawled, "All ri-ight."

"And now, can't we get the sleigh right away?" demanded Mrs. Davison.

"Guess so. But th' road beyond th' village ain't broken."

"Well, can't we break it?"

"Guess so."

"Well, let's try. I'm game for it."

"All ri-ight," with a little snap in his eye.

If, however, Mr. Silas Freeman did not show any curiosity as to our movements he was one of the few persons we saw who did not. The object of our coming was evidently known to the population at large, or to such portion of it as we saw. They peered at us from the porches of the white houses under the big elms, or from the stoops of the stores, where they stood bundled up in rough furs and

comforters, and, turning as we passed, discussed us as if we were freaks of Nature.

As we drove along, plunging and creeping through the snow-drifts, Mr. Freeman began to unbend. "This road ain't broke, but somebody's been along here. Guess it's Miss Hewitt."

"Who is Miss Hewitt?"

"She's one o' Doct' Hewitt's girls—she's one of the good women—looks after them 's ain't got anybody else to look after 'em."

"I hope I shall know her some day," observed my cousin.

"She's a good one to know," remarked Mr. Silas Freeman.

We crept around the hill toward the river.

"Ah! 'twas Miss Hewitt," observed the driver to himself. "She's been to dig out F'lissy." He was gazing down across the white field at a small "shackelty" old cabin which lay half buried in snow, with a few scraggy apple trees about it.

When at length, after a somewhat strenuous struggle through snow-drifts up to our horses' backs, we stood on the portico of the old mansion, though

the snow was four feet deep I could not but admit that the original owner knew a "pleasant seat" when he saw it. Colonel Hamilton, when he established himself on that point overlooking the winding river and facing the south, plainly knew his business.

The remains of a terraced lawn sloped in gracious curves around the hill in front, where still stood some of the grand elms which, even a century before, had awakened the enthusiasm of the owner's Southern visitor. Beyond, on one side, came down to the river's margin a forest of pines which some good fortune, in shape of a life-long litigation, had spared from the lumberman's axe, and which stood like an army guarding the old mansion and its demesnes, and screening them from the encroachments of modern, pushing life.

On the other side, the hill ran down again to the water's edge, the slope covered with apple trees which now stood waist deep in snow.

Behind, huddled close to the house, were a number of out-buildings in a state of advanced dilapidation, and yet behind these the hill rose nobly a

straight slant of nearly half a mile, its crest, where once the avenue had wound, crowned with a fine row of elms and maples, a buttress and defence against the double storm of the north wind and the casual tourist.

Moreover, the original architect had known his business, or, at least, had known enough to give the owner excellent ideas, for the house was a perfect example of the Colonial architecture which seems to have blown across the country a century and a half ago like the breath of a classical spring, leaving in its path the traces of a classical genius which had its inspiration on the historic shores of the Ægean and the Mediterranean. From foundation to peaked roof with its balustrade, in form and proportion, through every detail of pillar and moulding and cornice, it was altogether charming and perfect.

I became suddenly aware that my cousin's eyes had been on my face for some time. She had been enjoying my surprise and delight.

"Well, what do you think of it?"

"It is charming—altogether charming."

"I thought you would like it."

"Like it! Why, it is a work of genius. That architect, whoever he was——"

"Helped to clarify the ideas of the owner."

"Helped to clarify! This is the work of a man of genius, I say."

"His name was Hamilton. He built it and owned it."

As we came out of the house and plunged around to the long-closed front door to take another look at the beautiful façade, my cousin gave an exclamation.

"Why, here is a rose, all wrapped up and protected." She was bending over it as if it had been a baby in its cradle, a new tone in her voice. "It is the only sign of care about the whole place. I wonder what kind it is?"

"I guess that's F'lissy God'in's rose-bush," said Mr. Freeman, who had followed us in our tour of inspection, now with an inscrutable look of reserve, now with one of humorous indulgence.

"Who is F'lissy Godwin?" asked Mrs. Davison, still bending over the twist of straw.

"She's one of 'em—she's the one as lives down

the road a piece in that little old house under the hill you saw."

"Does anyone live in that house!"

"Waal, if you call it livin'. She stays there anyway. She wouldn't go to the New Home—preferred to stay right here, and comes up and potters around —I al'ays heard she had a rose-bush."

"Oh! She has a new home? Why on earth doesn't she go there?" questioned Mrs. Davison.

The driver's eyes blinked. "Guess she didn't like the comp'ny. That's what th' call the poor-house." His eyes blinked again, this time with satisfaction at my cousin's ignorance. "They might's well ha' let her stay on up here. She wa'nt flighty enough to do any harm, and she'd ha' taken as good care of the house as anyone. But they wouldn't." His tone expressed such entire acquiescence that Mrs. Davison asked, "Who would not?"

"Oh, them others. They had the right, and they wouldn't; so she's lived down there ever since I knew her. All the others 're dead now—she's sort o' 'the last leaf on the tree.'"

The quotation seemed suddenly to lift him up to a new level.

My cousin's face had grown softer and softer while he was speaking.

"Poor old thing! Could I help her?"

"Waal, I guess you could if you wanted to."

"I do. Couldn't you give her something for me?"

"I guess I could, but you'd better get somebody else to do it. She'd want to know where it come from, and I d'n' know 's she'd take it if she knew it come from you as is buyin' the place."

"Oh! I see. But you need not tell her it came from me. You might give it to her as from yourself?"

It was the one mistake she made. His face hardened.

"Waal, no, I couldn't do that."

My cousin saw her error and apologized. He said nothing, but he softened.

"Miss Hewitt might do it. She's the one as hunts 'em up and helps 'em."

"Well, then I will get her to do it for me. She will know how."

"She knows how to do a good many things," observed Mr. Freeman quietly.

III

After this I knew that nothing would keep my cousin from buying the place if she could get it, and so in truth it turned out. After some negotiating, in which every edge was made to cut by the sellers, the deal was closed and the Hamilton place with all its "improvements, easements, appurtenances and hereditaments," became hers and her heirs' forever.

No child with a new toy was ever more delighted.

I received one evening an imperative message: "Pray come immediately," and on my arrival I knew at once that my cousin had gotten the place. Her eyes were dancing and all of her old spirit appeared to have come back. The flush of youth was on her cheeks. I found the big library table covered with photographs of the place and the house, inside and out, and if there was a spot on the table not covered by a photograph it held a book on gardening.

"Well, I have it."

"Or them," I observed quietly.

"Them"? with a puzzled look. "Never mind! I know it's an insult, though I do not know just how. Well, I have sent for you. I want——"

"My advice?"

"—You to carry out my ideas."

"How do you know I will?"

"Come, do not talk nonsense. Of course you will." She did not even take the trouble to smile. She began to sketch her views rapidly and clearly in a way that showed a complete comprehension of the case.

"The house is to be done just this way. And the grounds are to be restored as they were. All these old buildings are to be removed." She was speaking with a photograph in her hand showing the decrepit stables—"these—which are recent excrescences, pulled down; this moved back to its old site under the hill down there—and here is to be the garden just where it was—and as it was. See, here is the description."

She took from the table a small volume bound in red leather, and opened it.

"Here is an old letter written by my grandfather a hundred years ago, giving his impressions of the place when he visited it."

"'Here I am in the Province of Maine, where I arrived a few days ago, expecting to find myself in a foreign land. Imagine my surprise when I discovered that the place and the people are more like those among whom I was brought up in my youth than in any other part of New England which I have visited. Of course, I am speaking of its appearance in the summer, for this is July, and it might be early June. . . .'

"You don't want all this—he gives simply a description of the distinction in classes which he was surprised to find here—'many of the families having their coats of arms and other relics of the gentry-class.' Ah! here it is. Here is the description:

"'I was invited to Colonel H.'s and he sent down for me his barge manned by a half dozen sturdy fellows, just as might have been sent from Shirley or Rosewell or Brandon; and on my arrival I found the Colonel awaiting me on the great rock which

dispenses with any need for a pier, except a float and a few wooden steps.

"'He has one of the pleasantest seats which I have found in all my travels—a house which, though not large, would have done justice to any place in Maryland or Virginia, and which possesses every mark of good taste and refinement. It fronts to the south and is bathed in sunlight the whole day long.

"'The garden immediately caught my attention, and I think I might say I never saw more beautiful flowers, which surprised me, for I had an idea that this region produced little besides rocks and Puritanical narrowness: of which more anon. The garden lies at the back of the house, beginning on a level, with formal borders and grass-walks where the turf is kept as beautiful as any that I ever saw in England, and where there is every variety of flower which Adam and Eve could have known in their garden. In the first place, roses—roses—roses! Then all the rest: Rush-leaved daffodils, the jonquilles—"narcissi," the Colonel's sister calls them; phlox of every hue; hollyhocks, peonies, gillies—almost all that you have. Then the shrubbery!—

lilacs, syringas, meadowsweet, spiræa, and I do not know how many more. I could not get over the feeling that they had all been brought from home. Indeed, I saw a fat robin sitting in a lilac bush that I am sure I saw at home two months ago, and when I bowed to him he nodded to me, so I know he is the same. On the land-side the garden slopes away suddenly into an untilled stretch of field where the wild flowers grow in unrivalled profusion. This the Colonel's sister calls her "wild garden." A field of daisies looked as if it were covered with snow. An old fellow with a face wrinkled and very like a winter apple, told me that one "Sir William Pepperil brought them over, and that is the reason you don't find 'em anywhere else but here." I did not tell him of my friend the robin.

"'By the way, the Colonel's sister is a very charming young lady—dark hair, gray eyes with black lashes, a mouth which I think her best feature, and a demure air. She is so fond of her garden that I call her Hortensia.'"

"What's that?"

My cousin broke into a silvery laugh. "You

know now where I got my name. But I don't think my grandmother ever quite forgave her."

She closed the book.

"Now, you see what I want—to restore it exactly as it was, and only to add what will carry out this idea."

"Are you going to have a gardener?"

"Of course——"

"A landscape gardener?"

"Yes, of course! And a man to furnish the house by contract—and another to select my pictures for me!" Her nose was turned up, and she was chopping out her words at me.

"Well, you need not be so insulted."

"I told you I wanted to *restore* it."

"I only wanted to know how much in earnest you are."

"Well, you put one new thing in that house, not in keeping with the idea I have, and you will know."

IV

With the first opening of Spring my cousin was at work on her "restoration." She had the good sense to select as her head workman—for she would

have no contractor either in or out of the house—a local carpenter—an excellent man. But even with this foresight it must be said that her effort at restoration was not received with entire approbation by her new neighbors. The gossip that was brought to her—and there was no little of it—informed her that they considered her incoming as an intrusion, and regarded her with some suspicion and a little disdain. Some of them set out evidently to make it very clear to her that they did not propose to let her interfere in any way with their habits and customs. They were "as good as she was," and they meant her to know it.

In time, however, as she pushed on with her work, always good-natured and always determined, she began to make her way with them. Silas Freeman stood her in good stead, for he became her fast friend.

"She is rather citified," he agreed, "but she can't help that, and she aint a bit airified."

I was present on an occasion when one of the first evidences of her gradual breaking into the charmed circle came. The work on the house was

progressing rapidly. Rotted pediments, broken window frames, unsound cornices, lost spindles, being replaced by their exact counterparts; each bit that needed renewal or repair being restored with absolute fidelity under her keen eyes. And all the time she was rummaging around through the country picking up old furniture and articles that dated back and belonged to the time when her grandfather had visited the place. No child ever enjoyed fitting up a baby-house more keenly than she enjoyed fitting up this old mansion.

It was really beginning to show the effect of her tact and zeal. She had actually gotten two or three rooms finished and furnished, and had moved in, "'the better to see, my dear,'" she said to me. "Besides, I know very well that the only way to get workmen out of a house is to live them out. I mean to spend this summer here."

Outside, too, the work was progressing favorably, though the frost was scarcely out of the ground. The rickety buildings were all removed from her cherished ground "where once the garden smiled" and she was only awaiting a favorable season to lay

out her garden and put in her seeds and slips, which were already being gotten ready.

It was one of those Sunday afternoons in April when Spring announces that she has come to pay you a visit, and leaves her visiting card in bluebirds and dandelions. The bluebirds had been glancing about the lawn all day, making dashes of vivid color against the spruces, and even a few robins had been flitting around, surveying the land and spying out choice places. Dandelions were beginning to gleam in favored spots, and a few green tufts were peeping up where jonquils had, through all discouragements, lived to shake their golden trumpets in sheltered places.

My cousin had enjoyed it all unspeakably. She had moved all day like one in a trance, with softened eyes and gentle voice. Before going to church she had, with her own hands, unwrapped the rose-bush she had observed on her first visit, and I heard her bemoaning its poor, starved condition. "Poor thing —you are the only real old occupant," I heard her murmur. "You shall have new soil and I hope you will live."

V

THE afternoon had been perfect and the sun had just stolen over toward the top of the western hill and was sending his light across the yard, tinging the twigs of the apple trees with a faint flush of pink, and we were watching the lengthening shadows when I became aware that there was someone standing in the old disused road just outside the yard. She was an old woman, and there was something so calm about her that she seemed herself almost like one of the shadows. She was dressed in the plainest way: an old black dress, now faded to a dim brown, a coat of antique design and appearance, in which a faint green under the arms alone showed that it, too, had once been black, a little old bonnet over her thin gray hair, which was smoothed down over her ears in a style of forty years before.

"There is someone," I said in a low tone. "Isn't she quaint?"

My cousin, seeing that she was a poor woman, moved down the slope toward her.

"Good afternoon," she said gently.

"Afternoon"—with a little shift of her position which reminded me of a courtesy. "Air you Miss Davison?"

"Yes, I am Mrs. Davison."

"The one 't bought the place?"

"Yes, I am that one. Can I do anything for you?" The tone of her voice was so kind that the old woman seemed to gain a little courage.

"Well, I thought I'd come up and see you a moment this Sabbath afternoon."

"Won't you come up and see the sunset?"

"Well, thank you—perhaps I will, if it will not discompose you."

My cousin smiled at her quaint speech. As the visitor came up the slope I saw her small, sunken eyes sweep the grounds before her and then rest on the rose-bush which my cousin had unwrapped that day.

"It is so beautiful from this terrace," pursued my cousin.

"Yes, it is," said the visitor. She stood and gazed at the sky a moment, then glanced half furtively at the house and about the grounds, and

again her eyes rested on the rose-bush. Her faded weather-beaten face had grown soft.

"I have seen it very often from this spot. I used to live here."

"You did! Well, won't you walk into the house and take a cup of tea? I have just ordered tea for my cousin and myself."

The visitor gave me a somewhat searching look.

"Well, perhaps, I will, thank you." As she followed my cousin in, she crossed over to the side of the walk where the rose-bush was, and her wrinkled and knotted old hand casually touched it as she passed.

My cousin went off to see about the tea, and I was left with our visitor. She was pitifully shabby and worn-looking as she sat there, with shrunken shoulders and wrinkled face beaten by every storm of adversity, and yet there was something still in the gray eyes and thin, close-shut lips of the unconquerable courage with which she had faced defeat. She was too dazed to say much, but her eyes wandered in a vague way from one point to another, taking in every detail of the repair and restoration.

The only thing she said was, "My!—My!" under her breath.

When my cousin returned and took her seat at the little tea-table with its silver service, the old lady simply sat passive and dazed, and to the polite questions of the former she answered rather at random.

Yes, she was a girl when she lived there. Her grandfather had left her the right to use one of the upstairs rooms, but "they" would not let her have it. "They did not like her to come on the place, so she didn't come much."

My! wasn't the tea good—"so sweet and warm-in'?"

Every now and then she became *distraite* and vague. She appeared to have something on her mind or to be embarrassed by my presence, so I rose and strolled across to a window, and from there over toward the door. As I passed I heard her state timidly the object of her visit.

"I heard as you were a-goin' to dig up everything and set out fresh ones, so I came to ask you, if you had no particular use for it and were goin'

to dig it up anyway, if you wouldn't let me have that old rose-bush by the walk. I'd like to take it up and carry it up to the graveyard——"

"Of course, you may have it."

"You see, that's the only thing I ever owned!" pursued the visitor.

I saw my cousin give a deep and sudden catching of her breath, and turn her head away, and after a grab at her skirt her hand went up to her face. The old woman continued quietly:

"I thought I'd write to you, and ask you about it; but then I didn't. It wasn't—just convenient."

"Of course, you—m——" My cousin could not get out the words. There was a second of silence and then with shameless and futile mendacity she began to mutter something about having "such a bad cold." She rose and dashed out of the room, saying to me with a wave of her hand as she passed:

"Tell her, Yes."

When she returned to the room she had a fresh handkerchief in her hand and her eyes were still moist.

Before the old woman left, it was all arranged.

The rose-bush was to be moved whenever Miss Godwin wished it; but meantime, as the best season for moving it had not come, my cousin was to take care of it for Miss Godwin, and Miss Godwin herself was to come up and look after it whenever she wished, and was certainly to come once a week.

"Well, I am sure I am very much obliged to you," said the old woman, who suddenly appeared much inspirited. "I never would have ventured to do it if I hadn't heard you were going to dig up everything anyhow, and I wouldn't have asked *them* in any case, not if they had lived till Judgment Day."

When Miss Godwin rose to go, my cousin suggested that we should walk down to her home with her, and as we started out she handed me several parcels and I saw that she herself had as many more.

At the door of her dark little habitation Miss Godwin showed some signs of nervousness. I think she was slightly alarmed lest we might insist on coming in. My cousin, however, relieved her.

"Here are a few little things—tea and coffee and sugar and—just a few little things. I thought they might taste a little better coming out of the old

house, you know." She was speaking at the rate of two hundred words a minute.

"Well——"

When we were out of earshot I waited for her to begin, but she walked on in silence with her handkerchief doubled in her hand.

"Your cold seems pretty bad!" I said.

"Oh, don't!" she cried with a wail. "That poor little half-starved rose-bush!" she sobbed. "The only thing she ever owned! And she didn't even have a stamp to write and ask me not to throw it away! I wish I could give her the house."

"What would she do with it?"

"Make 'them' feel badly!" she cried with sudden vehemence.

VI

All that spring and summer my duties in the way of helping my cousin to "clarify her ideas" took me from time to time to Hamilton Place, and every week Miss Godwin used to come to look after her "estate," as the rose-bush was now dubbed Under the careful treatment of my cousin's gardener, and watched over by my cousin's hawk eyes, the rose

bush appeared to have gotten a new lease of life, as under the belated sunshine of my cousin's friendliness and sympathy the faded mistress also quite blossomed out.

Every week she came in to tea, and my cousin, with her tact, drew her on to sit at the tea-table and pour tea.

The crowning event of her life was the housewarming that my cousin gave to the neighbors. They were all there, and possibly among them were some whom, as my cousin had said, she would have liked to make feel badly. Whatever the motive, my cousin invited Miss Godwin to pour tea, and to her mind, not Solomon in all his glory was arrayed like her, in her new black dress with "a real breast-pin."

For some time she had been coming every day to help about things, but much of her time was spent in pothering about the rose-bush, watching two buds that were really beginning to give promise of becoming roses.

"They all knew now" that the rose-bush was hers, and she wanted "them to see that it had roses on it." They had said "it weren't of no account."

The day of the event she came early. The summer night had been kind. The buds were real roses. She spent much of the day looking at them. No matter what she was doing she went out every few minutes to gaze at them, and each time my cousin watched her secretly with delight.

Suddenly, toward afternoon, just when the guests were expected, I heard my cousin give a cry of anguish: "She is crazy! She is cutting them!" She rushed to the door to stop her. On the threshold she met Miss Godwin. She was pale, but firm and a trifle triumphant.

"Oh! What have you done?" cried my cousin.

Miss Godwin became a little shy.

"They are the only things I have, and I would have liked you to wear them if you had not been in black; so I thought I would put them in a vase for you."

"I will wear one and you shall wear the other," said my cousin, "and then I will press mine and keep it."

I shall never forget the expression on Miss Godwin's face.

"Me?—My!—" with a deep intaking of her breath. "Why I haven't worn a rose in fif—forty years!"

I have reason to think she understated it.

My cousin took one of the roses—the prettier of the two—and without a word pinned it on her.

When the guests arrived it was interesting to watch Miss Godwin. At first she was all a-flutter. Her face was pale even through the weather-beaten tint of her faded cheek, and her eyes followed Mrs. Davison with mute appeal. But in a little space she recovered her self-possession; her head rose; her pallor gave way to something that was almost color, and she helped my cousin with what was quite an air.

My cousin could not have done a cleverer thing than place her at the tea-table.

Silas Freeman expressed the general judgment. When he was bidding her good-by he said, with a kindly light in his eyes, "Weäll, I guess you was about right in that thing you said that time."

"What was that?"

"That you wa'n't altogether city folks."

THE NEW AGENT

THE NEW AGENT

I

JOE'S first recollection of Elizabeth was as far back as the time when his mother took him, the year after his father died, to see Mrs. Fostyn, who had been her schoolmate. Joe never forgot the wonders of that visit. The fine old house with its carved mantels and wainscoting, amid the maples and elms on Fostyn Hill, outside of Lebanon, always remained in his mind as the grandest he had ever seen. The silver on the sideboard was enough, it seemed to him, to have served all Lebanon, and there were horses in the stable which were only ridden and did no work. It must, he thought, be a great thing to be a member of Congress. He always remembered the shock of hearing old man Grantham, who kept the store two or three miles below, say of Mr. Fostyn that "a fool and his money

were soon parted." It was the first time he was conscious of disliking a man because he had small eyes set close together and wore a beard under his chin. Elizabeth, a tangle-headed tot with saucy eyes and a face where dimples played hide-and-seek, seized on him as her slave and made him do her utmost bidding.

When next he saw Elizabeth she was a half-opened rosebud. The brown hair that used to blow about her face was plaited and tucked up on the nape of a shapely little neck. Her eyes were saucier than ever. She was then a school-girl, on a visit to Mr. Sewall, the superintendent of the railway, who had been a friend of Joe's father. Joe, meeting her, assumed the position of an old friend, and got soundly snubbed.

"*Miss* Elizabeth, if you please," with a courtesy and an uptilt of the bewitching little nose.

Joe laughed, though he was discomfited. But being bold, six feet tall, and good-looking, and having just left school and gone to work for himself, he tried to carry it off and play the man. In a moment of daring, there being no one by but a fat

robin in a lilac-bush, he caught and tried to kiss her. He nearly got his head slapped from his shoulders. She was like lightning, and her rage was that of a tigress. Her eyes actually darted fire. His apology only appeared to make her more furious. She listened to him till he was through, and then, when he held out his hand in friendship, she stepped forward, as he thought, to take it, and, with her white teeth set deep in her lower lip, boxed him again with all her might. Then Joe was angry! He caught and kissed her twice and set her down crumpled and half scared. It had been fire against fire. But when Joe cooled down he was in love with the little spitfire. After that he saw her in every apple-blossom, every rose, every violet, and that she was as cruel to him as a young ogress did not save him. It was, therefore, with alacrity that, a few months after Mr. Fostyn's death, Joe accepted of the superintendent the offer of the agency at Lebanon.

"Miss Elizabeth, if you please," had just accepted the position of teacher of the little Sewalls—and Joe felt somehow as though his being on the railway were a link between them.

"I guess you'll do well enough if you just stick," said the superintendent, glancing appreciatively at Joe's steady eyes, high cheek-bones and strong chin.

"I'll stick." Joe thought of Elizabeth Fostyn.

"Well, that's what I want you to do, and that's what I think you will do, too, or I would not bother to send you there. It ain't any easy load to carry. There is a might of work to do. The other man I sent there said he would stick, too, but old Grantham worked him out—skeered him—done somethin' to him—run him out, anyway."

"I'll stick," said Joe again, firmly, his gray eyes set steadily on the superintendent's granite face.

"All right," said the superintendent, with the air of a man who had had an unpleasant duty to perform and was glad he had gotten through with it. He fell to a more congenial theme, and then began to curse Grantham again.

II

When the Deacon turned the widow Fostyn and her daughter out of their old home on the southern slope of Fostyn Hill and put the key in his pocket

he thought he had done a very smart thing. He prided himself on doing smart things. He had gotten possession for half its value of a piece of property which he had long coveted, and finally, by his smartness, had choused her out of three hundred dollars, or, to be more accurate, three hundred and six dollars and twenty-three cents. This last, perhaps, gave him more satisfaction than any of the other things, for although the Deacon was not insensible to the seduction of power or the honeyed sweetness of revenge, the sweetest thing in this world to him was Money—the possession of money. He loved it. He had always loved it since, as a little boy, he used to warm his chapped hands on the pennies in his pocket, and though position and authority were not without their allurement, and he never let anything pass him that he could hold on to, they had their drawback in that they cost some money. Not a great deal in the Deacon's case; but still some. "But Money," as he used to say, "don't cost anything; it breeds money." It was not because of his being hard-hearted that he was hard on the widow, but because of his avarice. He

could weep, or make a fairly watery counterfeit of it, if the case came home to him, and—it did not cost him anything. But if it promised to cost even a cent his face became rock. It grieved him—that is, it almost grieved him—to turn the widow and her daughter—such a pretty girl, too—from the home where the Fostyns had lived so long; but when John Fostyn made the last payment on the mortgage that he had put on the place he had gotten no receipt for it from the Deacon, and when he died suddenly the Deacon could not bring himself to mention the fact that it had been paid. He considered that Providence was in some sort responsible for it. It worried him a good deal when the widow, after being turned out, instead of going away, as he had supposed she would—to somewhere in Delaware, where she came from—had taken a small house right on the road he had to travel when he went to the station, where she took in "fine sewing"; as if, thought the Deacon, anybody was fool enough to pay more for "fine sewing" than for any other kind. He felt aggrieved that she should have done so unkind a thing. It looked almost malicious in her to sit down

where every time he passed along he was reminded of the three hundred and six dollars and twenty-three cents. And he had once thought so well of her, too!

It grieved him yet more when Elizabeth Fostyn, who was, altogether, the prettiest girl in the town, or, for that matter, in the county, cut his son, Jim, dead on the road. Jim was the one thing near to that stony organ which the Deacon called his heart.

In time, however, the Deacon quite forgot his worry over the three hundred and six dollars and twenty-three cents, and he wondered at his disquietude over the announcement of the appointment of a new railway agent at Lebanon by the name of Shannon. Was it that in some way he had heard his name connected with that of the Fostyns? What was it? It was very vague. Some one—oh, yes, it was Jim who had said that, "if it were not for that d—ned Joe Shannon" he might stand some chance.

So, one day, the Deacon drove up to Lebanon and stopped at Squire London's store. The Squire was the only man in Lebanon he envied and hated. He

envied him for his wealth and hated him for his liberality and popularity. His store, under the big elms, was the general rendezvous of the town, and here all the news could be learned. What the Deacon heard that morning was not reassuring. He discovered that in the four or five days the new agent had been at Lebanon he had already made friends. Several of the loungers spoke of him as if he were quite out of the ordinary; and Squire London plainly liked him.

"Waal, so long—I just come by to see how you folks were." And the Deacon strode on up to the station to "look him over," and, maybe, to "take a fall out of" the new agent.

III

In those few days Joe had found his new place much pleasanter than he had expected. The hours were long: from five A.M., when the first train passed, to nine P.M., when No. 13, the last one he had to report, came by. He had to act as station agent, telegraph operator and depot hand; handling all the baggage and loading and unloading the freight—

which was growing rapidly; but he was young and strong and he was making his own living. Besides, though the girl with saucy eyes, the memory of whom had brought him there, was away from home, teaching school, she would, he knew, be back at Thanksgiving, and now and then a letter came to him, which, though cool as a dewy leaf, lasted him for two good weeks.

Lebanon, too, was a pleasant place, with its white houses lying under its great elms, with the hills sloping away in the sunshine; and the people, if reserved, were kind and, when once reached, responsive. Old Solon London, the principal man in town, a deacon in the white church, trustee of the new library, director in the brick bank and general adviser of all Lebanon, had been kind to him; had given him much sound advice: not to put too much trust in what certain people said—he named them frankly; to attend to his own business; not to smoke cigars—which "cost more money than a young man should pay"; not to play cards for money with men he did not know, and not to marry a fool. Among the men he named was Deacon Grantham.

"When he gits confidential, watch him."

Joe, sitting at his desk next day, was just thinking of the Squire's advice when the Deacon walked in. He had a noiseless step.

He did not greet Joe; he plunged straight into business. This was always his way, he said.

"Where's the agent?" he demanded.

"Right here," Joe spoke shortly, for the Deacon's tone was raspy. He looked up quickly enough to catch a pair of shrewd eyes fastened on him with so piercing a glance from under the gray brows that he was instantly alert. The next second the glance was withdrawn, and Joe encountered a face of stone, with a pair of small, deep eyes set back under bushy eyebrows which half hid them; a nose like a sickle; where his lips should have been, a line; a heavy, grizzled beard under the chin, cut as sharply as wheat is cut by a cradle, and a big Adam's-apple which worked up and down in his long neck.

Joe knew instantly that this was Deacon Grantham. He knew further that he had come for war—he felt it by an instinct, and his blood ran warm: he girded himself for the fray.

"Where's Millard?"

"Somewhere in Minnesota."

"Gone away?"

This gave Joe the advantage. The Deacon knew that he had gone, and Joe knew that he did so. He therefore simply nodded and got himself together.

"Who are you?"

"The agent." Joe looked at his silver watch—partly to see the time and partly to appear unconcerned.

"Is there anything here for Deacon Grantham?"

"I don't know; I'll see." Joe took his freight-book and began to scan its pages. He took his time doing it.

"You don't appear to know too much about your business, young man," observed the Deacon.

"No, not *too* much. No, I don't see anything billed to Deacon Grantham. Is that his name?"

"His name? Don't you know what a 'deacon' is? Where did you come from, young man? Who ever heard of 'Deacon' bein' a name?"

He spoke with rising scorn, and Joe waited.

"I have. I know a whole family of 'Deacons,'" he said dryly.

When the Deacon drove away from the station he knew that he had a long fight on his hands. Joe knew it, too. The Deacon's last words as he gathered up the reins over his thin horse were: "Waal, young man, I hope next time you'll know Deacon Grantham."

"I'll not forget you," said Joe briefly.

IV

The hours were long at Lebanon, and, as the superintendent had said, the work was hard, but Joe did not mind that. He was as strong as an ox and could sleep like a log. What he did mind was the talk that now and then reached him that Deacon Grantham's son was still "settin' up" to Elizabeth Fostyn, and, as some said, was "kind o' winnin' her over." "All those farms were bound to count for something," said the village gossips. "And then there was the old Fostyn place. It was natural she'd like to get back there."

This disturbed Joe a good deal; but whenever he

got a little note, worded as carefully as a copy-book, he used to feel that it was impossible. She would not have given him so much good advice if she had not been interested in him. "And she simply could not marry that Jim Grantham."

In six months Joe knew all the people in Lebanon. The station became quite a rendezvous for the young people, especially for the young girls. It was remarkable how often they walked down to meet friends who did not come on the trains.

The boys used to gather at his room sometimes for a quiet little game of cards, and in time he found it was being talked about. Squire London gave him a hint about it. "The Deacon says you're ruinin' the morals of the young and innercent, Joe, and you'd better stop. Don't let him git a line on you." So, Joe determined to stop. But one night Jim Grantham was in town and he insisted on having a game in Joe's room, and Joe yielded. He would not let Jim Grantham bluff him.

It was not his duty, but it was his custom, to go down to look at the switch at night before going to

bed, for a freight train came by late at night and did not stop, except on signal.

This night the game was so close, with Jim Grantham losing, that Joe failed to go until he heard the train pass. The next moment came a bumping and a crash, which he knew meant that the train had run into the switch. In a twinkling he was on the spot. No one was hurt and no serious damage was done, for the train had been going slowly. Only one box-car had been jammed and broken, and in an hour or two the train, with the injured car cut out, was on its way again; but Joe felt that his days at Lebanon were numbered.

Curiously, the first thing he thought of was old Deacon Grantham—how he would gloat! The next person was Elizabeth Fostyn.

Jim Grantham was unusually sympathetic. "I swan! that's too bad. What're you goin' to report?"

"The truth."

"I want to know!" said Jim, blinking incredulously. "Why don't you tell 'em you had just been down? I ain't goin' to give you away."

"Because I had not. I am not going to lie about it."

The next morning he sat down and wrote to Mr. Sewall, the superintendent, telling him the facts. He also wrote to Miss Elizabeth Fostyn. He told her he would undoubtedly be removed, and he thought he would go to the far West. He hoped that the superintendent would write and scold him, and that Miss Elizabeth would write and beg him not to go. Neither did what he hoped for. Miss Elizabeth wrote and scolded him, but said not a word about his not going West. In fact, she rather encouraged the idea. "The West was such a fine field for a young man, if he did not play cards too much." She mentioned, casually, that she had already heard of the accident from "Mr. Grantham."

The very next day after the accident Deacon Grantham drove up. Joe's jaw squared and his lips tightened as he heard his voice.

"Waal, young man, I hear you've had an accident. Guess you'll be joining Millard out in Min-

nesoty?" said the Deacon, warming his hands at the stove.

"Well, if I do it won't be because anybody here sent me there," flashed Joe over his shoulder.

"Nor—guess it'll be the railroad company'll do thet. Blessin' warn't nobody hurt."

Joe was so exasperated that he forgot himself.

"There's nothing here for Deacon Grantham," he said pointedly. The next second he regretted it for the Deacon's eyes blinked with a gratified light in them.

"So you remember me?"

"Yes, I remember you." Joe was growing cool again.

"Waal, young man, let me give you a piece of advice."

"Don't waste it."

The Deacon shot a wicked glance at him.

"Next time you set up all night gamblin' see thet your switch is locked."

"How did you know it was unlocked?" demanded Joe, facing the Deacon suddenly with so level a glance that the latter almost jumped.

"I don't know nothin' about it, but thet's what I heard," he said, blinking uneasily. "But you needn't be gettin' so hot about it, young man."

"I'll make it hot for the scoundrel who undid that lock if I ever find him."

"Who says the lock was tampered with?"

"I do."

"Any suspicions who done it?" The Deacon's voice had grown confidential.

"No. If I had I'd send him to the penitentiary."

The Deacon's face took on a look of relief.

"Young man, it's an awful thing to bring a charge like that against a community," he began severely. "This is a law-abidin' community, and it ain't wise for a young man like you to lay sich an accusation against it."

"I am not bringing any accusation against the community. I am bringing it against the scoundrel——"

The Deacon turned his eyes up slightly.

The superintendent was sitting in his office the evening after he received Joe's letter when there

was a faint tap on the door, and Elizabeth Fostyn walked in. She looked somewhat nervous—indeed, even agitated, a thing so rare with her that the superintendent observed it.

"She has had trouble," he thought to himself; "I wonder if it is one of the children, or if she wants money?"

So he was somewhat guarded when he spoke.

"Well?" he began doubtfully.

She walked up and stood opposite him on the other side of the table, on which she rested the knuckles of her hands.

"I hear you have had an accident up at Lebanon?"

"Oh—yes. We have had an accident there. That young man left the switch open."

"Did he leave it open? You are sure it was he?"

"Well, it was left open. Same thing. He didn't see that it was shut. Cost us money. And might have killed the men."

There was a pause. Then she said: "Are you going to discharge him?"

"Why—ah——" began the superintendent slowly.

As he glanced up his eyes fell on her face and her color suddenly deepened.

"Because I do not think it will happen again." She had evidently supposed he was asking her a question.

"Is he anything to you?" demanded the superintendent, wondering if Joe were her cousin. He was surprised to see the rich color flush her face and brow, and even warm her round throat.

"He is an old friend of—of ours." Her eyes were steady, and the superintendent, grizzled and battered by work, was suddenly aware of their depth and beauty. He looked down and shuffled his papers.

"I do not believe he left the switch open, and I believe if you are lenient with him he will justify it," pursued Elizabeth; and the superintendent, whose eyes were on her hands, suddenly observed that the knuckles resting against the table were white with the pressure.

"I do not expect to discharge him, but I will make him pay for the damage," he said briefly.

Elizabeth had moved around the table and was

standing close to him as he ended. She suddenly bent over and, throwing her arms about his neck, kissed him warmly. The next second she turned and dashed from the room.

The superintendent sat for some moments in a reverie of pleased surprise.

"That girl has heart, after all," he said; "I thought she had only intellect."

It did not occur to him until later to wonder if she had a deeper interest in Joe than the somewhat reserved allowance of formal friendship with which she treated all young men. And when he suggested the idea to Mrs. Sewall, that clear-sighted woman rejected it with what was very near to scorn.

V

A FEW days later, as the train came in, the superintendent swung himself down from it. Joe's eyes fell on him before he had touched the platform. He knew his time had come. He determined to meet his fate like a man. So he attended to his duties, and when the train had gone on and he had dispatched his report, he went out and met the

superintendent. His face was grim enough and he was suspiciously polite.

"Well, you had a bad accident here the other night?"

"Yes, sir. I'm glad it was no worse."

"How did it happen?"

"Just as I wrote you—I neglected to look at the switch before going to bed, and it was unlocked."

"M-hm! Think some one tampered with it?"

"I don't know about that—looks so; but I don't lay it to that. If I had gone there, as I always had before, it wouldn't have happened."

"M-hm! Well, let's go down and look at it."

They walked down the track in silence, and when they reached the spot Joe explained how every thing occurred. As they strode back in silence, Joe said:

"I suppose you have come to turn me off—so I have got everything straight—my books are all ready —and—everything. But I want to say that if you are afraid I'll ever do *that* again you need not turn me off. If you leave me here I may make mistakes,

but I'll never make *that* mistake again as long as I live."

He did not see the gleam of amusement in the superintendent's eyes, or the fleeting twitch of his lip.

"Well, I suppose you are ready to pay the repair bill on that car and cowcatcher?" said the other dryly.

"I am; I think that's just."

The superintendent shot a side glance at him out of the tail of his eye and walked on in silence. He was a big, broad-shouldered man, with grizzled hair, a wholesome face and keen eyes. When they got to the station he said:

"I will send you the bill. If I make you pay it you may be of some account some day. I'm going to give you another trial. But if you can't play cards and lock your switch, too, give up cards."

"I will. Thank you, sir. I will justify your kindness." He thought of Deacon Grantham and then of Elizabeth.

What the superintendent was thinking was, "I wonder if that girl wrote him to say that. Those

were the very words she used when she came to ask me not to turn him off."

Joe found his life in Lebanon not so pleasant as it had been at first. The Deacon had spread around a story that he not only was leading the young men astray, but that he had charged the community with a crime, and his popularity somewhat waned. Squire London and some others still stood by him, but many looked at him askance. Another aggravation was that Miss Elizabeth Fostyn was not coming home for her holiday. She was going to Portsmouth, and Joe had learned that Jim Grantham was going to Portsmouth, too. "By George! they'd better lock their switches," said Joe to one of his friends. But this ebullition gave him little comfort. In fact, the world held little comfort for him that autumn and, if it had not been that to leave the field would have been taken as an admission of defeat by the Granthams, Joe would have pulled out and have gone West, whither the cords of adventure were drawing him. Joe heard that the Deacon had said that he was going to run him out of town. And this made him stick.

VI

THAT year the cold weather set in suddenly and with unknown severity. After a beautiful autumn there came a long raw spell, with the skies as dull as lead. Every one said "Snow." But it did not snow. For days the snow simply piled up in the skies. Then one morning it began to fall, at first in small, feathery flakes, softly, slowly; then rapidly; and then about midday the wind whipped around to the northeast, and it changed to fine, swift-falling particles that filled the air. When evening came it turned to a dense, driving storm. The temperature ran down like a clock and the wind blew in every direction. Minute particles, driven by the wind, stung like shot and drove through every chink and cranny.

The term "blizzard" was not yet known, but the storm was. It was born that night.

About dark Joe telegraphed down the line and learned that the passenger train which had started would not come through, but would be stopped at a little town some ten or more miles below Lebanon. So, as the office grew cold and the storm was raging

outside, driving the fine snow in at every crack Joe filled his stove and went supperless to bed in his little room next to the office. Without, the snow was climbing steadily up the wall, and even within, it lay in little down-like rifts along the floor. Joe had hardly gotten to sleep when he began to dream that he was being called, but as he knew it was a dream he did not stir; he only snuggled closer under his blankets and was glad he knew a dream when it came. Then the call began to worry him: "Leb.—Leb.—Leb." He waked, and it was not a dream at all. There was a switch at the foot of his bed, and the instrument was click-clicking "Leb.—Leb.—Leb." as hard as it could rattle. Half asleep still, he scrambled out of bed and catching the key asked who it was that wanted him and what in the thunder he wanted. The reply waked him wide enough. An engine and a plough were wanted at once from Upton, six miles beyond Lebanon, and Upton could not be awakened: the wires were probably down. The evening train was stuck fast in a snowdrift near Pike River Bridge, eight miles below Lebanon and three miles from the nearest station;

the fires were out, and unless succor could be gotten to them some of the passengers might perish. The train was full of women and children. Word must be got to Upton at once.

"I'll get word there as soon as possible," said Joe.

In six minutes Joe was in his clothes and heavy boots, and in two more he had prepared himself as well as he could for what he knew would be a bitter ride. Tying his overcoat collar around his neck over his muffler with a handkerchief, and his cap down over his ears with another; knotting his sleeves tightly at the wrists, as he did when he went sliding, he pulled on his gloves.

He knew it was to be a hard ride; but when he opened the door and stepped out into the night he knew it was to be a fight for life. The storm seemed to have increased tenfold since he went to bed, and the air was filled with fury. The snow stung his face as if it had been shot. He plunged through the drifts for a couple of hundred yards to the livery stable and began hammering on the door. It was some minutes before he could make any one hear;

but, presently, a man half dressed and half asleep opened the door a little way and with an oath let him in. When he saw Joe and learned his errand the oath changed to sheer and undisguised blasphemy. He would be eternally destroyed before any horse of his should leave his stable that night. "No man nor beast can make that ride to-night," he declared.

"One man is going to make it," said Joe, "and if I can't get a horse I will make it on foot; but I want a horse. There are women and children in that train, man, and the fire is out."

After much hesitation and some bargaining, together with considerable advice and repeated assurances that if his horse were hurt he would look both to the railroad company and to Joe for two hundred dollars, the man saddled and brought out what Joe knew to be the stoutest horse in his stable. He was a short-coupled, broad-backed sorrel, with a strong, sinewy neck, flat bones, a deep chest and muscles of steel. His chestnut coat, his broad brow and his wide, clear eyes bespoke the Morgan strain that had made the horses of the region famous; and Joe, who

had been reared among horses, and had a farmer's eye for a good one, felt himself kindle as he recognized the horse. He had driven him once when he went to see Elizabeth Fostyn, and the horse was always associated in his mind with a perfect summer day, amid beeches and maples, with the grass dappled beneath them by the sifted sun-light. He remembered that she kissed the horse, and how he envied him. He felt it was a good augury to have this horse walk out of the stable for him, and he drew near and patted him as Bragdall tightened the girths and adjusted the stirrups.

"He's a good horse; I know him."

"Guess everybody knows *him*," said Bragdall; "he used to belong to John Fostyn, and you know he had the best—wouldn't have no other kind; he'll take you there if any horse will, but I wouldn't try it to-night for every horse in this stable."

"No more would I," said Joe, "but I'll go all the same."

"If he gets in a drift let him have his head; he'll plunge out; and if he should stick just get off him and give him a loose rein. He can

break a track better than most men. Got a mite more sense."

"I'll do it—I know about it."

"Don't you want a good dram? I've got a bottle —you'd better take it along——"

Joe shook his head.

"No, I want my wits to-night."

"That's so. Well, I've got a pot of coffee—by the stove—I take it of a morning."

"I'll take that, thank you."

Joe lifted the pot, and, on the owner's invitation to take as much as he wanted, drained it.

"That ought to keep you awake till Judgment Day," said Bragdall as Joe mounted. "Here, take this and wrap it around you under your knees —so."

He threw a heavy horse-blanket across the horse in front of the saddle and tucked it under Joe's knees.

"If I lose that horse the railroad's got to pay me for him."

Joe was settling himself into the saddle.

"You ain't going to lose him; but if you

do, it won't make much difference to me what you get."

"Guess that's so. Now for it! Let him take his time." He opened the door. The blast nearly swept Joe from his saddle, but the next moment, with body bent and head ducked low, he was out in its full sweep.

VII

The snow was nearly up to the girths on the level, and in drifts was up to the saddle-skirts, and the road lying to the northeastward made the ride, for the most part, in the teeth of the storm. The horse, as if knowing what was before him, after the first balk when the storm struck him, buckled down to his work, and with ears laid back, and head firmly set a little sidewise, struck straight for the upper end of town. After the first chill the work seemed to warm up both horse and rider, and wherever the snow had blown from the road Joe pushed to a trot. By the time he got into the open country he found the snow deeper, and he was glad to be able to keep steadily ahead, even at a walk.

Soon all trace of the track was lost in the swirl, and he guided his horse by the tops of the trees, which he could dimly see on each side of the road, through the blinding sheet that enveloped him and the splinters of ice that drove across his face and beat down his eyelids.

As the time passed the warmth died out in his body and he began to grow deadly cold. Sometimes the snow would lie in drifts as high as his horse's back; but, as the stableman had said, he knew how to plunge out of it. Twice he stuck and stood helplessly still, and Joe got off him and helped him to free himself, but the last time he dismounted he was so stiff and found so much difficulty in remounting that he determined not to get off again. He could scarcely pull the blanket over him. How far off the treetops were! Then a new trouble beset him: he began to get sleepy. He knew that he must keep awake at every cost, so he began to think of the poor, freezing people in the train. He pictured Elizabeth as being among them. From this he drifted to the days he had spent with her—few and precious as gold, among the summer woods.

How happy he was then! How warm! He almost fancied himself back among the trees, with the sunshine sifting through, dappling the ground and falling on her hair and face. This, too, made him drowsy, and he awoke with a start to find his horse standing still, with his tail to the storm. For a second he thought the storm had lulled; then a horror seized him and shook him wide awake. Had his horse turned around? If so he was lost, and with him all the women and children in the car. Slipping from the saddle, in an agony of fear, he stopped to see if there were any sign of the track he had made. Yes, thank God! at last, there was the track, beyond doubt—there was the blanket he had dropped, already nearly covered by the snow. He seized it and, throwing it over the horse, managed to scramble up again, and turning, headed once more in the face of the storm. Fear now kept him awake, for his horse appeared to be giving out. He began to pray, and, like most men in such a case, to make resolutions and pledges.

Once more, however, the drowsiness began to steal over him in spite of all he could do, and it took

all his resolutions and prayers to keep awake. He felt sure that he would never reach his destination, and it seemed useless to try. But the thought of how it would please Deacon Grantham stimulated him. Just then the trees by which he was guiding seemed to grow denser on one side and to be all of one height, and the next moment something like a dim light appeared among them. At first he thought he was dreaming, and then it came to him that this was a house. He was in Upton. With a rush came consciounesss and a clear apprehension that he must hold out a little longer. A few moments later he had reached the office, and tumbling from his horse he began to feel for the door. He tried to call, but the sound died at his lips. Twice he thought he had it, but each time he was at fault—then he felt a plank and began to thump it with his numb hands and to push against it in a dazed way. It suddenly gave way before him, and he fell full length on the floor.

"Joe Shannon! How did you get here?"

"My horse — train stuck — engine—plough —'t once," and with this Joe rolled over.

"He's dead," said the agent.

Dead he might have been if the man had not known what to do; but after a vigorous rubbing with snow to restore the circulation he poured a stimulant down his throat, and presently dragged him to the stove and began to rub and chafe him all over, and so brought him to.

When the relief engine and plough were ready to start, Joe, rolled in blankets, was being lifted into the agent's bed. He unexpectedly rose up.

"Where am I?"

"You're all right," said his friend. He was putting on his overcoat.

Joe sat up.

"It's true. I was afraid it was a dream—where's my horse?"

"All right—in the stable. You go to sleep and rest."

"The train? Where are you going?"

"We are just starting——"

"I'm going, too." Joe sprang from the bed, dragging all the blankets with him.

His friend thought he was a little daft, or, possibly, tight with what he had taken.

"Well, what are you going to do with my blankets?" he asked indulgently.

"Take 'em with me. I'll never stir another step as long as I live without taking all the blankets in sight. I'd be in Kingdom-come but for that bracer and blankets. And that car is full of women freezing to death. Get all the wraps you can."

"I guess you can come," said his friend.

It was a slow run, if that can be called a run which is never more than a creep, and often consisted only of repeated buttings and bumpings into the white drifts piled high in the cuts. At last there was a cry. Faintly glimmering through the sheet that wrapped everything in its icy folds was a light. They were almost against the engine before they were seen. The engineer and fireman were down in the cab sheltering themselves from the sweep of the storm. By the time they halted, Joe, seizing his blankets, sprang down, and, plunging forward, made his way to the passenger-car. As he pushed open the door the scene within staggered him.

Half the people in the car were huddled together,

three or four in a seat, while the others were rushing up and down the aisle, apparently playing a game under the direction of a young woman who was standing on a seat and ever shouting to them, "Faster! Faster!" while she slapped her hands and encouraged them.

Joe's first idea was that they had all gone crazy. His next was that he was crazy himself, to think that the girl standing on the seat, with her back to him, drilling the crowd with her waving arms, could be Elizabeth Fostyn. At his words, "Relief engine!" pandemonium broke loose. A sudden life was thrown into every vein. Men and women crowded around him, asking a hundred questions at once, and telling him how they had been kept alive by a girl. Joe tried to get a glimpse of her, but she had disappeared. As Joe pushed his way through the throng, Elizabeth Fostyn arose from a seat.

"Oh, Joe!"

A little child was in her arms, wrapped in her cape.

Joe jerked off his overcoat, and against her protest folded her in it.

"I thought, perhaps, you would come," she said.

It was not much, but it sent the blood singing through Joe's veins. He said truly that he was "warm enough."

VIII

After this Joe was popular enough in Lebanon not to mind the Deacon's flings and fleers. But his real reward was Elizabeth's smiles. Life appeared to Joe to have opened up again, and though Elizabeth, after the first glimpse into her soul, which had flooded him with light and given him a glimpse into the inner Heaven, shut to the doors again and left him in semi-darkness, it was no longer the outer darkness in which he had groped, but only a sort of twilight, and on the far horizon was the glimmer of a new hope. She might be capricious, even perverse; but he knew now that she was not going to marry that hatchet-faced Grantham. He almost forgot to hate old Grantham, though not quite. He would never forget that so long as the Deacon held on to Elizabeth's home. Besides, the Deacon did what he could to keep himself in mind. Joe heard of many evil things he said of him. He knew now

that it was through the Deacon that the superintendent had first heard of the accident at the switch, as Elizabeth had learned it from Jim Grantham. How had he known it so early? This was what Joe was working on.

When Deacon Grantham saw Joe next after his rescue of the train, his greeting was characteristic.

"Guess you felt you owed the railroad company for that little accident last year?"

Joe shook his head. "You'll have to guess again."

"Bragdall says that horse was about the best horse he ever had in his stable 'n that ride clean ruined h'm. Guess the railroad company'll make it up to Bragdall?"

"I know nothing about it."

"You don't 'pear to know much about anything, young man."

"I know enough to attend to my own business," snapped Joe.

The Deacon turned away with a snarl. His eyes had an evil glint in them; and Joe soon heard of new threats that he had made against him.

"You and the Deacon don't appear to be hitching horses together much these days?" said the Squire to him. "He says this place is too small for the two of ye, and I 'low he ain't thinkin' of emigratin' himself and leavin' all them farms he's got. You got to watch him."

"I am watching him," said Joe.

Joe worked harder than ever that spring. He wanted to "get off" for a day or two and go to see Elizabeth, and the only way to get a holiday was to earn it.

One Saturday he had the hardest day of his life. Two consignments of flour had come and he had to unload them alone. He nearly gave out, but not quite. He unloaded the last ten barrels by sheer nerve. His back had long since given out. There were one hundred barrels for Squire London and ten for Deacon Grantham. It was the latter that Joe unloaded last and found so heavy. With every barrel he cursed Deacon Grantham. He sent notice of the freight's arrival to the Deacon that very day, with the grim hope that the latter would come

for his flour while he was away and would have to load it himself.

That Sunday was a pleasant one for Joe. In the words of an old hymn he had been taught as a boy, it was "like a little Heaven below." Elizabeth Fostyn made it. She was, as has been stated, teaching the superintendent's children, and the superintendent was very cordial to Joe. He even hinted at an advancement. But Elizabeth gave Joe the advancement he enjoyed most. She really let him wait on her. He envied the little smug-faced Sunday-school scholars in the stiff pews, who had her care. He sat and adored her all through church, and walked home with her, feeling more religious than he had ever done in his life, and quite as if he had an angel under his charge: an angel with beautiful feathers on a big hat instead of on her wings.

When Joe returned to his office on the following morning he was not quite sure whether he were still on earth. The words of the superintendent had partly opened the door of the future; but it was Elizabeth Fostyn who had flung it wide. He was,

however, soon brought down to earth. He was following down the delivery-line of his freight-book.

"I see old Grantham's got his flour," he said to his substitute, who was about to take the morning train. "Hope he had to load it himself?"

"He did," said the other, "and he made a big row about it, too. He came just at train-time, and when I got through he had it all loaded. He says he's going to make it hot for you for getting off and leaving the office."

Joe chuckled. The day before he had decided to give up swearing.

For some unaccountable reason Joe rose from his seat and went into the freight-house, where he counted all the barrels that remained. Then he counted them again, and with a puzzled look counted them the third time, more carefully than he had done before. Then he went back and examined his books.

"I see Squire London's got two of his barrels. You didn't set it down."

His friend shook his head.

"No, that's all. Ain't been anybody here to get flour, but just your friend."

"Then he has two barrels that don't belong to him."

Joe's hope still was that Squire London might have sent and gotten two barrels; but at dinner-time this hope disappeared. Squire London had not gotten any part of his flour. It was plain, then, that Deacon Grantham had taken twelve barrels instead of ten. Joe sat down and wrote him a letter, asking if this were not the fact. Then, on further consideration, he determined to go personally and see him about it. So, that afternoon, having gotten a friend to take his place for a few hours, he walked down to Deacon Grantham's. If he should have to pay for two barrels of flour he could not afford to drive, and, after all, eight miles was no such great matter for a long-legged boy of twenty-two.

It was nearly sunset when he reached the Deacon's, and as he came to the Deacon's farm he thought he had rarely witnessed a more pastoral scene. The

Deacon's store was at the corner, fifty yards below his house; but the dwelling stood back a little from the road, with a well-kept yard in front, and with outbuildings strung off to one side, ending in a big, yellow barn. In the farmyard the Deacon was feeding his sheep, and as the pink light of the setting sun fell upon his long white beard, Joe was seized with a sudden shrinking; he felt that it would be almost sacrilege even to suggest that the Deacon could have made a mistake. His voice was somewhat quavering when he spoke.

The surprise of seeing him appeared, for a second, to startle the Deacon; but as Joe modestly stated his errand the Deacon's blank face hardened.

"Young man," he said, "I have not made any mistake. I don't make mistakes. I only got the flour that I was entitled to. If you had stayed at home and attended to your business you wouldn't have lost this flour, if, as you say, it's disappeared. Knowing that you weren't attending to your business I went myself to bring my flour, and, what is more, I had to

load it myself; and you haven't heard the last of it, either."

Joe returned home in deep gloom. He had evidently made a mistake, and what was more, he would have to pay for the missing flour, and if old Grantham could bring it about he would lose his place. The road was twice as long to him going back as it had been when he went down.

All that week Joe spent investigating; but there was no trace of the flour.

Friday morning, however, an acquaintance dropped in. He had a grievance against Deacon Grantham, and he found a sympathetic listener in Joe. Every time he cursed the Deacon, Joe felt as if he had done him a favor.

"They say since he robbed the widow Fostyn of her place he's afraid to meet her in the road, and every time she comes to town he thinks she's come to see Lawyer Stuart to bring suit against him and get it back. Ain't no love lost between Lawyer Stuart and the Deacon. I heard Lawyer Stuart say last week that the Deacon ought to be indicted for

overloadin' his horses. Says he seen him with a load of flour on Saturday week couldn't no two horses in the county pull up Fostyn's Hill, and he was beatin' 'em unmerciful and talkin' mighty unbecomin' a Deacon, too."

"Did you hear him say how many barrels he had on his wagon?" Joe asked casually.

"No; didn't hear him say how *many* he had; jist heard him say he had an ungodly load for two horses to pull up that hill."

When his visitor left, Joe sat for some time pondering. That afternoon he struck out down the road which Deacon Grantham always took. He stopped at a store on the roadside and asked for a drink of water. Casually, he inquired, also, if they wanted any flour, and if any one had been hauling flour by there within the last two weeks. No one had but Deacon Grantham. No one had observed how many barrels he had. Joe decided to push on. At the first house beyond Fostyn's Hill he stopped again to ask for water, and he made the same inquiry.

"I guess you can't sell much flour this way," said the kindly woman who came to the door. "Deacon

Grantham sold some below here last week, I know, 'cause the Deacon, I heard, sold it to lighten his load. I heard as how he had a balky horse and he couldn't get up the hill with all he had, so he parted with a lot of it down to Jesse Roache's."

"Do you know how much he had?" Joe asked.

"Well, I didn't count it," said the old woman; "but my granddaughter did. Mary, come here! How many barrels of flour did you say Deacon Grantham had on his wagon t'other day when he went by here with such a load?"

"Twelve," said Mary, with the color coming to her face, being much more interested in the young man, with his broad shoulders and keen eyes, than in any question relating to flour.

"Yes, that's it," said the grandmother; "I remember now, I counted with Mary, 'Two, four, six, eight, ten, twelve,' and said as how it was a pretty big load to come up that hill with them horses."

"Yes," said Mary, "he just could make it, and Tom Putnam and I had a talk as to whether a round dozen barrels of flour weren't too much for one load.

Tom said as how if the Deacon weren't too stingy to feed his horses they could pull a dozen barrels easy enough; but ten barrels was too much for any two horses that the Deacon feeds."

Joe, with his heart beating, thanked his friends and kept on to Roache's store. Here he inquired guilefully if he wanted to buy any flour; but Mr. Roache replied that he had all he wanted at present.

"What is flour worth?" he asked.

Joe gave him a price—a high one.

The storekeeper's face brightened at the thought that he had made a bargain.

"You ask too high for it, young man. Deacon Grantham didn't ask that much for it, and you know the Deacon knows how to charge."

"Well, maybe, his flour was not as good as mine," said Joe.

"Yes, it is good flour, too; I have got a couple of barrels here now."

"Will you let me see it?"

"Walk in."

The storekeeper led Joe back to his storeroom, and there were the two barrels of flour,

with the "Haxall and Crenshaw" brand—the very barrels which had disappeared from Joe's freight-room.

"I hear he had a mighty heavy load on that day," said Joe.

"Yes, he had," replied the storekeeper; "that's the only reason he let me have it at that price."

Joe found the road back to Lebanon short enough that evening.

The next afternoon Joe hired a buggy, and, inviting Squire London to go with him, drove down to the Deacon's. When he drove up, the Deacon, as before, was feeding his cattle, and, as before, the rays of the evening sun gave him a peculiarly benignant appearance.

Joe, leaving Squire London in his buggy in the road, passed through the gate and into the barnyard, as he had done the week before, and in the same voice, and almost in the same words, he explained the object of his visit.

"I think you must have made a mistake, Deacon," he said, almost tremblingly. "Anyway, my ship-

ment is out two barrels, and I'll have to pay for them unless you have made a mistake."

The Deacon turned on him with unexpected severity.

"Young man, I have told you twice that I have made no mistake; that I only got the flour that belonged to me; and it would serve you right if you did have to pay for them. And, young man, you would get off very easy by only havin' to pay for them. You don't attend to your business, even if you know it. And now I want you to get off my place, and don't you ever put your foot here again."

Joe put his hands in his pockets. An unexpected sparkle shot into his eyes.

"No," he said, "I ain't going to get off your place until I am ready. But I am going pretty soon." His voice was perfectly calm, and his eyes were level with the Deacon's eyes. "I thought, maybe, you might have taken the flour by mistake; but I am satisfied now that you stole it, and stole it to injure me, and I have come here to tell you that I have got full proof that you did. I know where you sold it, what you got for it, and know where it is

at this minute. Now, you come up and see *me*. I make my report Monday."

He wheeled and walked quietly out of the barnyard, and, getting in his buggy, turned and drove home.

"He looks real benevolent, don't he?" said the Squire. "Looks like he was ready to git milk for new-born babes. But you got to watch him."

"I have," said Joe.

That night Joe paid a visit to Lawyer Stuart.

IX

The following Monday morning Joe was at his desk, humming a tune, and every now and then chuckling to himself, when there was a step behind him. Turning, he faced Deacon Grantham. The Deacon was dressed in his Sunday clothes.

"Well," said Joe, "you have come. Sit down."

The Deacon drew up a chair. His face was pale, and his eyes showed that he was much disturbed. When he spoke he had the confidential tone which Squire London had mentioned to Joe.

"Yes, I have come to see you to explain things. I did make a mistake."

"Yes?" said Joe. "Well?"

"You haven't made your report yet?"

"I haven't sent in my report yet," said Joe; "it goes to-night."

"Well, that is all right," said the Deacon; "I want to pay you for the flour."

He glanced around over his shoulder to see that no one was within ear-shot; then slowly put his hand into his pocket.

"I got six dollars a barrel for it, and, of course, if I pay for it you won't say anything about it to anybody, and I will make it up to you? Suppose we call it fourteen dollars for the two?"

Joe waited until he had gotten his money out, and then shook his head slowly.

"Well, say fifteen?" said the Deacon, and putting his hand into another pocket he drew out another dollar, which, evidently, had been placed there to meet this contingency.

"No," said Joe, "I think not."

He turned around to his desk and, taking up a pen, began to write.

The Deacon was a spectacle. For a moment he appeared to be lost in doubt and indecision. Then he drew nearer.

"Well, what will you settle it for?" he asked.

Joe reflected a moment, and then, rising slowly, turned and faced him.

"I don't know that I ought to settle it at all, but I will settle it for one thing."

"What is that?"

"For a full deed of conveyance to Mrs. Fostyn of the place you robbed her of, upon the payment to you of the exact amount you paid for it, without one cent of interest; the interest being offset by whatever you may have gotten from it, whether it be much or little; that deed to be executed and delivered to me to-day." He had the words by heart.

The Deacon flung up his hands and burst out laughing. He was sincerely amused.

"Well, that is a good one! You think I am——!"

But Joe had turned and reseated himself, and begun to write quietly.

"A deed for the best place within ten miles of Lebanon for two barrels of flour! Well, I like your brass! What do you take me for?" The Deacon's laugh had an unwonted merriment.

Joe wrote on.

"You think yourself pretty smart, young man, don't you?"

Joe's pen went on quietly.

"I have brought you the amount I got for those barrels I took by mistake, just as you said yourself, and that is all you will get, young man."

Joe began to fold a suspicious, formal-looking paper, and the Deacon's eyes fell on it.

"What is that you've got there?" he asked quickly.

"My report," said Joe quietly, "charging you with stealing two barrels of flour." He was addressing the envelope.

"What are you going to do with it?"

"Mail it."

The Deacon's countenance fell, and he drew a step nearer.

"Wait a minute. Now, you be reasonable," he said. "You know everybody is liable to make mis-

takes. I am sorry I did it, and I came here to make a liberal settlement with you."

For answer Joe began to put the paper in the envelope.

"We'll call it five dollars for you, and you not to say anything more about it?" added the Deacon. He took out a fat pocket-book.

Joe lighted a candle, and taking a piece of sealing-wax began to heat it in the flame.

"Young man, you don't want to injure me?" The Deacon's voice had a new tone in it.

Joe sealed the letter with slow deliberation, and, rising, reached for his hat.

"Where are you going?" demanded the Deacon falteringly.

"To get this letter off," said Joe.

His eyes met the Deacon's, and the latter saw in them that which froze his blood and turned the marrow in his bones to water.

"Wait," he said.

"Not a minute; I am done."

"What is it you want? Make it ten dollars?"

Joe moved toward the door. The Deacon seized him.

"Call it twenty-five dollars; I have got it here in my pocket." He opened his pocketbook with surprising swiftness.

"Go," said Joe sternly, motioning him toward the door; "I want to lock up this office."

"Wait a minute—give me that report."

Joe still pointed toward the door.

"Go on!" Relentlessness spoke in his eyes.

The Deacon burst into tears.

"Young man, you are robbing me and my children. You don't want to rob my poor wife and son."

Joe turned and faced him.

"*You* know who is the robber." Something withheld Joe from saying more, but the scorn in his face said it all.

At the end of five minutes of expostulation and entreaties the Deacon brokenly asked:

"Who will pay for the deed?"

"It is written and paid for," said Joe. "Come along."

"I will sign it," sobbed the Deacon.

A half-hour later Deacon Grantham signed the

deed to the old Fostyn place, and the lawyer, with appreciation in every line of his face, handed it to Joe, who drew from his pocket and paid over to the Deacon the full amount that was due him on a close calculation.

As the Deacon left the office he turned to Joe:

"You swear you'll never say a word about that flour?"

Once more Joe's glance withered him. He flung the deed on the table between them.

"If I ever hear of your saying a word against the widow Fostyn, or any one named Fostyn, I tell."

"I ain't goin' to say a word against her as long as I live," said the Deacon.

Joe slowly took up the deed again.

The man that drove home that afternoon in the Deacon's wagon was ten years older than the man that had driven up to town in the morning.

That night Joe wrote a letter to Elizabeth. The deed went with it.

"And now I am going to the West," he said in closing.

The following afternoon he was sitting at his desk

when he heard the door open softly and then softly close behind him. Turning, he faced Elizabeth. And the heavens opened.

"Oh, Joe!" She buried her face in her hands.

Joe never knew how it happened.

In a second he was at her side and his arms were around her. The windows were wide open, but Joe forgot it.

An hour later they were standing together under the trees in the old Fostyn yard, when a wagon passed along the highway below them. As Deacon Grantham looked that way the setting sun, slanting across the grass, bathed them in its soft light. The Deacon almost reeled on his seat. Thirty years rolled back and for a moment he thought it was John Fostyn and his young wife as he had seen them there. As he drove on his face was as white as the flour that had lost him the place. But Joe and Elizabeth saw only each other's eyes.

A BROTHER TO DIOGENES

A BROTHER TO DIOGENES

AFTER a hard autumn's work, in which the strife had been more severe than I ever remembered it before, I found myself, as my doctor expressed it, "Not sick, but somewhat out of health." It had come to a pass when the ups and downs of the market meant a great deal to me. I wanted to be rich, and riches always meant more and more. Following the advice of my friends and clients, I had begun to take little "flyers," acting, of course, always on "sure things." I read three papers at the breakfast table, studied the financial pages of another, and bolted in to look at the ticker in the office of the first hotel on my way downtown. I had been quite successful, and the more money I made, the poorer I appeared to myself. I was not quite envious, but I could not bear to have others richer than I, and others were so rich.

It was just then that I began to push cabs and cars along and to feel a little sensation in my fore-

head which, after an unexpected flurry in the street that ran my holdings up and down for the space of a week or two and left them decidedly down, became a sort of band-like feeling. When things had settled, several of my clients had gone to the wall and one of my friends, whom I saw every day at lunch, had gone to bed and forgot to turn off the gas. For a month or more I tried to bully myself into the idea that nothing was the matter; but after many nights in which I seemed hardly to lose consciousness, I consulted my friend, Dr. John. He looked at me in the quizzical way he had.

"You say you are rich?"

"No, not rich; but moderately well off."

"Well off!" he repeated with his half-cynical smile. "I call you pretty badly off. You won't live long—unless," he added, after a pause which seemed interminable, "you knock off right now and go away."

"How long do you give me?"

"How much did you say you slept last night?"

"I didn't sleep at all."

"You slept the night before?"

"Yes, some."

"All right; you will leave here the day after to-morrow and go either to the Riviera or to the South-west. I give you your choice. And you will give me your word that you will not leave your address with anybody but me, or write a business letter and will not come back without my consent."

"And if I don't?"

"Then you will go to pieces." He tapped his forehead.

Two days after that I took the train for the South-west, and on the morning of the fifth day, after a dusty climb over the Divide and a run through the Mohave Desert, with its scrub and sand, we suddenly came out into the land of flowers and green trees, lemon groves and crystal air.

That afternoon I spent knocking about in the quaint old town on Santa Barbara Bay, which still held some of its Spanish quaintness and charm, though the modern tourist and the modern caterer to the tourist were rapidly sweeping it away. It was the first time in several years that I had ever been conscious of any other pleasure in the outside world

than that of mere physical comfort. But the quietude began to act like a balm.

I had discovered, however, that I was really "out of health," and the talk of "stocks and bonds" and "money" and "markets," which I could not escape even at my meals began to be an exasperation. I wanted to get well. To escape these inflictions I began to ride about the country.

It was upon one of these rides that I came upon the "Brother to Diogenes."

I was walking my horse slowly along a trail across one of the foot-hills of the Santa Ynez range, which towers like a rampart of light between the sea and the desert, when turning an abrupt corner I came upon the "Brother to Diogenes."

An old man, sun-tanned, travel-stained, and weather-beaten, with a shaggy beard, who at first glance looked almost like a tramp, was seated on a grassy bank, his back propped up against a boulder, basking in the sun which streamed down on him, while a few yards below him, contentedly grazing on the fresh green sward, was a small and evidently very old, sunburned "pinto" horse.

His pack was undone and lying, half opened up, on the ground.

I possibly might have passed on with a casual salutation had I not observed that in the old man's lap rested a small worn leather-bound volume, which he had evidently laid down when he filled the pipe which he was now contentedly smoking.

"Good-afternoon," I said.

"Good-evening, sir," he said in reply.

The pleasant voice and the old-fashioned use of the word "evening" made me look at him more closely, and I noted that his features were unusually good, his eyes clear and keen, his face expressive of benignity, and that, while his outer clothes were shabby and worn, his linen, though plain and coarse, curiously enough, was unusually clean.

"You have selected a good point," I said.

"Yes, sir; it is one of my coignes of vantage of which I am particularly fond. I often come with an old friend to enjoy it." Here he laid his hand on his book as one touches a friend's arm. "I think it must have been from just such a point that 'stout

Cortez' gazed on the Pacific, 'silent upon a peak in Darien'!"

With his pipe in his hand he made a gesture toward the south, where the green hills lay in fold above fold, as though Spring had cast her robe about her and left it to lie along the ocean's marge in countless undulations.

"May I enjoy it with you a few moments?" I found myself recognizing his claim to it.

"Certainly, sir. Take a seat and make yourself at home. 'The world is wide enough for thee and me.'"

By this time I had dismounted.

"From town, son?" he demanded indifferently, with a slow turn of his eyes from my direction to where, far below us, the brown houses and reddish roofs of Santa Barbara lay speckled among the green palms and pepper-trees of the quiet valley, with the old mission at the head of the valley, a mere dab looking over the town to the blue bay with the bluer islands ranged along on the other side. I nodded.

"Like it?" He was a man of few words until interested.

I replied at some length, "I liked it very much." It was so "different from the East," where I had come from: "so much quieter; the life so much more natural," etc. He appeared to lose interest as I went on, so presently I paused.

"Why did you come so far?" This was after quite a wait.

"Well, I was a little out of health; worked too hard." I thought he referred to my coming West, but he did not. He gave a grunt.

"I know. I mean why'd you come so far from town? Fond of country?"

"Wel-l, I don't know— Ye-es, I suppose so."

"Humph!" He sucked quietly at his pipe. And after a listless minute he picked up his book and began slowly to read. It was plain that I had fallen in his good graces.

I meant to recover my lost place, if possible.

"I expect I am fonder than I know," I began. "I have lived in town so much that I had almost forgotten what the country was like." He laid his book down very slowly, and presently, without condescending to look at me, said:

"Why'd you do that?"

"I was working."

"Humph! Got a family!" This was not a question.

"No. Nobody but myself. But I wanted to succeed."

"Why?" This was after a perceptible pause.

"Oh, I don't know. Because I was a fool, I suppose."

"You were." This was his first positive assertion. "Well, did you?" he vouchsafed to inquire after a pause.

"Why, yes; measurably. I made a good deal of money."

"You call that success?" His eyes were resting on my face.

"Yes. Don't you?" He did not vouchsafe to reply to this. He only pulled at his pipe.

"What'd you do with it?" He was getting interested.

"Oh! Invested it—put it in bank and in stocks —gilt-edged securities."

"What for?"

"To keep." I was not used to this Socratic method.

His weather-beaten face relaxed and his blue eyes twinkled.

"That's right funny," he drawled. "A man works himself to death to get money to lock up and keep in a bank."

"Not at all," I fired up. "I want power; the respect of—of people." I had started to say "of friends," but I was glad I did not, for he said quietly:

"Must be poor kind of people respect you for your money. What'd you think if I were to tell you I had more money than any man in the country?"

I knew well what I would think, but I did not wish to appear rude. I had become interested in the old fellow lounging there in his rags, so I simply said:

"Have you? Tell me about it. Where is it? I suppose it is a mine? I see you are a prospector."

He nodded without removing his pipe from his mouth. Then, after a few puffs, he took it out.

"Yes, it's one of the richest, I think *the* richest I ever saw."

"Well, where is it?" I determined to humor him.

He looked at me with a shrewd glint in his deep-blue eyes.

"It is where you are not likely to find it unless—Do you know the shores of Bohemia?"

"No, I do not. It's been some time since I studied geography."

"I thought so. Well, I'll only tell you that I've got it." He chuckled in a half-childish way which satisfied me that my first conjecture was right, and that he was a little mad.

"Well, tell me about it," I said. "How did you come to get it?"

"Oh, I don't mind doing that, son. I just stumbled on it—just stumbled on it, you may say, after hunting my heart out like many another fool." He was talking to himself rather than to me.

To break the reverie into which he had drifted I asked:

"May I inquire where you came from?"

He turned his eyes on me with a little twinkle in them.

"Well, I've seen the time and place when a ques-

tion like that wasn't considered altogether polite. Th' wasn't but one man given to asking that particular question: the marshal, and he had to have his gun handy."

"I did not mean any offence."

"Oh, no. It happens that I know no reason why I should not tell you. I am from the East. You know the wise men came from the East."

"A long time ago. And your na——?" I checked myself just in time.

"That question, too, I've seen make a man carrion. But I don't mind telling you. I am a brother to Diogenes."

"And you have been rich?" I began to see how it was.

"I *am* rich," he replied gravely. "Richer than Crœsus, richer than Solomon ever was, and he 'made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones.'

"When the war closed I found myself flat down on the ground, for everything was gone except the ground; even the fences had disappeared, and I've often wondered since I came West what would have happened to us poor fellows if we had found wire

fences when we camped at night, instead of those good dry rails that we used to burn against orders. I had just enough to get away and take my younger brother with me. We went to New York, where I knew some people, and he secured a position in a railway office, while I found a place in an office—a mining bureau they called it. We were ambitious to succeed—at least, he was. I had rather got mine knocked out of me. A year at Point Lookout and those five years down there trying to keep the old place from going into Jim Crew's pocket had a little dulled my energy, and I was fond of books. But Ken was ambitious. He meant to succeed. And work! You never saw a boy work so. Why, it was day and night with him. He worked himself to the bone. He was thinner than I was when I came out of Point Lookout, and I was thin! Week-days and Sundays he was at it—late at night I'd sit up and wait for him sometimes, and sometimes I'd just turn the lamp down and go to sleep, it was so late. And sometimes when he came in he was so tired he couldn't sleep. I tried to get him to let up; but he said he

couldn't. The work was there, and he had to do it or fall out.

"One morning—it was Sunday, a bright spring morning—I was going into the country to see the peach blossoms and wanted him to come along, but he said he couldn't; he was due back at the office. As he was dressing I saw him stagger. He sort of sank down on the bed, and I saw his lips were red. I had seen men bleed from the mouth when a bullet went through 'em.

"'Let 'em know at the office I couldn't come,' he said, 'and I'll be down to-morrow.'

"The doctor I got just took up his hand and then laid it down again and looked at me. He had been an old soldier too. I had told him what he had been doing.

"He knew what I asked him, though I didn't say a word, and he just shook his head.

"'What brought it on?'" I asked.

"'Worked to death—that's what they do. I've seen many of them.'

"Ken rallied, and I thought he was going to pull through; but that night it came on again, and before

I could get the doctor he was gone. I did not grieve for him at first much, I was so glad he could rest.

"'Who's the head-man down there?' I asked the doctor, 'and where does he live?'

"'Well, I don't know who is the superintendent; but the real head-man, of course, is the president. He owns the road. He is one of the richest men in New York He lives in that big house up on the Avenue. I saw him this morning going to church.'

"I suddenly felt myself go cold and then hot.

"'Does he go to his office every day?'

"'Guess he does, except when he's off on his yacht, or in Europe, or at Long Branch.'

"'Thank you, doctor. That's all,' I said. 'You did all you could or anybody could.'

"Next day a letter came for Ken from the office, mailed the evening before. It was a formal notice to call and get ten dollars due to him. He was discharged for not coming down the day before. I took the letter, and locking the door with Ken lying there, went down to the railroad office. It was one of those big buildings, full of floors, and all the floors full of pens where men sweat over long tables, with

the head men in corner rooms, wainscoted with mahogany, and with big desks and great arm-chairs.

"I went right in and up to the president's door through the whole line of offices and pens and desks where the men were shut in like prisoners. Two or three of them tried to stop me, but I passed right by them, and when they saw me keep straight they thought I had an appointment. I walked right in. The president was seated at his desk, with his stenographer at his desk. He was a big stout man with keen eyes, flabby cheeks, and a hard mouth. He had built himself a palace on the Avenue without a tree or a flower or even a spear of grass about it—just stone. The stenographer was a thin young fellow with a sallow face and thin, bloodless lips and restless eyes like a grub-staker used to watching for signs. They both looked surprised and the president was really astonished. He was too much astonished even to ask what I wanted; but it didn't take long to tell him.

"'You are the president of this railroad company?'

"'I am.'

"'I have a letter here.' I opened the letter to Ken and laid it on the desk before him. He glanced at it.

"'Well?'

"'I am his brother.'

"'Well?'

"'He's dead!'

"'Well, I'm very sorry; but I don't see what I have to do with it.'

"I suddenly grew hot and cold again.

"'—— you! Don't you say that to me. You killed him, and if you say that to me I'll kill you right where you sit.'

"He sank back in his chair, and his face was whiter than the stenographer's.

"'Don't get excited,' he said, and reached his hand out to touch a bell, but I cut him short.

"'Don't touch that bell. If I am excited, my brother is quiet enough. I left him on the bed where he died and you write to him that he is turned off because he didn't come Sunday when he was dying. You went to church that day, I reckon, and when the preacher said, "Remember the Sabbath

day to keep it holy," prayed God to write it in your heart.'

"'My dear sir,' he began, but I stopped him.

"'Don't you "dear sir" me either. You are nearer to death this minute than you ever were in your life. Here is your acquittance in full.' I laid his receipt on his desk. I had written it in full and made it out, 'For murdering Ken.'

"Well, I kept on working for a while; but I didn't have much heart left for it. I found that it was grind or rob. Half of them were robbing, or trying to rob the other half, and those who succeeded were called the successful ones and the rest just ground themselves away like an old pick.

"Even those who were called successful did not get any real good out of it. They got no enjoyment out of it except that which the miser has of hoarding up gold. The more they had, the more they wanted. Joy, health, peace of mind, happiness, all went through the sluice. And if they got more money they didn't know how to spend it. They built big houses and stored their barns or their bank boxes full and called on their souls to enjoy it, and about

then God required their so-called souls of them. About the time it came they had to go hunting for health. That railroad president dropped dead in his office one day, quarrelling with another railroad president over an extra million or so.

"I had studied geology and metallurgy, and had gradually become the one the firm relied on to examine and pass upon the mines that were offered them. So they got in the way of sending me out West to look at the mines. I was glad to go, for I had a holiday from the office and liked the free West. I used to find men there—rough, tough men, often full of lice and all uncleanness, but still men. But though I toiled for 'em and made 'em money, they did not offer to raise my salary.

"I told them one day that I wanted a holiday.

"'Well,' said the senior member, 'we can't spare you just now. We've got the biggest thing on we've ever had and we need you to go and inspect it.' He always talked as if he were saying, 'Let there be light,' and there had to be light.

"'That's a pity,' I said, 'for I'm going to take a holiday.'

"'I guess you can't take a holiday without I say so,' he said, frowning at me.

"'I guess I can, and to show you, I'll start right now.' I put on my hat. 'Good-day.'

"'I'll discharge you,' he said, very red. I turned and laughed at him.

"'Oh! You can't do that.'

"'Why?'

"'Because I've already discharged you. I'll never work another minute for you as long as you live.'

"When he saw I was going he tried to make up. He called me back—asked me to wait, and began to smear me with a lot of soft soap. He would double my salary, and all that. But I knew him and knew what it was worth, and told him, 'No.' That he knew I was worth more before, and was worth more than double my salary, and that if he had not increased it before, I did not want it now.

"Well, he almost begged me to stay, but I would not.

"So I came West.

"At first I thought I could set up as an expert

and assayer; but I fell into the way of going out and prospecting and liked it; so I held on to it. It took me out into the country—the desert or the mountains, and it brought back the times when I used to follow old Jack and sleep out under the stars. I had 'most forgotten what they looked like. You know you never see them in New York, or the moon either."

He suddenly lifted a warning finger.

"Sh-h-h!"

I saw he was listening to something with pleasure, for a pleasant light had come over his tanned face. I strained my ears in vain to catch the sound of a horse's feet or the far-off noise of a train, the smoke of which I could see between the hills two or three miles away. Suddenly I saw him peering eagerly into a chaparral thicket just below us, and became aware that a mocking-bird was singing lustily in his dusky retreat.

"Did you ever hear anything to beat that? That's what I've been waiting for. There are only a few of them up here, and they, like myself, prefer the quiet places to the noisy lowland down there. They

carry me back——" He drifted off into a sort of a reverie.

"Have you ever been to Italy?" he inquired presently.

"Yes, once." I had galloped through once, giving one day to Venice, one to Florence, two to Rome, and one to Naples and Pompeii. I was in rather a hurry.

"Did you hear the nightingale? I have always thought that I would go down to Mexico some time to see if I could not find one of those Maximilian brought there."

"No, I never did. I was there only a short time."

"I'd like to hear the self-same song 'that found a path through the sad heart of Ruth when, sick for home, she stood in tears amid the alien corn.'"

I brought him back with a question as to how he had got on in the West.

"Better than in the East," he said. "I kept on until I had tried pretty much every gold and silver field that opened up in the West. But somehow the more I saw of that sort of thing the less I liked it, the more I saw it was akin to what I had left in the

East and hoped I had shaken forever. Men trampling each other down, cutting each other's throats, for a bit of mountain-side or desert that would not yield as much as would plug a good-sized hole in a tooth. They were so busy scuffling to get gold that they did not have time to nurse the sick or bury the dead. I was in with 'em, too, broiling in the sun and freezing in the cold. All day in the gulch, and all night in the gambling-hell. Till one day it came to me just like a flash of lightning what fools they were and what a blind fool I was to bunk with such a lousy bunch of locoed jackasses. I had got together quite a good stake and was about to come out with it when a couple of scoundrels stole it from me. They said they came from Kansas, but I think they came from New York. Well, they sickened me, and I cut the business—sold out to the first man that made me an offer and struck out for myself. It was then that I got old Pinto, there. He was young then and tolerably mean, and the man's had him said he was locoed, but he guessed he wasn't locoed any worse than I. Well, I thought I knew who was locoed. So I got him, and together we cinched my

kit on him, and I tra-laed 'em and lit out. Look at him now! He's got more sense than the whole camp I left that morning. Knows just what he wants and when he's had enough, and don't go on trying to pile it up to keep." He nodded his head with pride over to where the horse stood dozing and lazily whipping off a fly from time to time with his sun-burned tail, a picture of content.

"Even then, do you know, I wasn't satisfied? I had the disease. For some time I kept on grub-staking; just travelling up and down till I got sort of bent double, looking at the ground for gold, like Mammon. I know the hot plains where the only vegetation is sage-brush, and the only breaks are the flat-topped buttes and the crooked *mesas* that frizzle in the blistering sun, and the only inhabitants are the lizards and the ants, and I know the big mountain-tops where a man can hear God writing his eternal laws as Moses did. So I went over most of the Rockies and Sierras, but, little by little, as I wandered up and down, I began to feel how good it was to be up there, even if I didn't strike gold, but

just found the air clear and clean as dew, and the earth quiet and undisturbed and carpeted with flowers, with the creatures God made—just as He made 'em, neither better nor worse. And at last I got to striking deeper and deeper in, so as to get away from folks and to have it all to myself and the other wild animals."

His eyes began to wander over the landscape, spread out at our feet like a map of Eden, and his face grew so ruminative that I saw he had lost interest in his story and I began to fear that I should not hear the rest of it. At length I made so bold as to ask him a question.

"How did you happen to find it at last?"

He came out of his reverie as out of a cloud.

"Find what?"

"The gold. Your mine."

"Oh! I was telling you about it, wasn't I? Well, it was fool luck—just fool luck. You know it doesn't take sense to get gold. Some of the biggest fools I ever saw made the most money.

"One day I had got up pretty high on the range and had turned my horse out, to enjoy one of the most

beautiful views in the world, when I struck it—just fool luck.

"I had about given up all idea of ever hitting anything richer than the dirt to bury me in when I stumbled on it. That's a curious thing about life. We work ourselves out trying to make a strike, and when we are about dead we stump our toe and there it is at our feet.

"I felt sure it was where no man had ever been before and where I came mighty near not going; for nature or God, after putting it there, fortified it with a more impenetrable abatis than any engineer could ever have designed if he spent his life trying. He hid it among inaccessible mountains and spread before it a desert where the sun dries the marrow in men's bones and an atmosphere which is like a blast from hell. I had a dim idea that there was a region over that way that no man's eyes had ever seen, and so I took an old friend or two along and struck for it, to see what it was like. Not that men had never tried it before, but no one had ever set his face that way and come back; and those who followed them found only borax beds and their sun-

dried bodies tanned by a sun that fried all the fat out of a man's body in a day.

"I tried a different way—in fact, I was a little crazy then, I think. They say God protects children and idiots. Anyhow, I went in over the peaks, my old Pinto and I. I didn't have much idea that I'd ever get in, and I had less that if I got in I'd ever get out again. But I loaded old Pinto down with enough to last me a good four months, and in I went. It was steep climbing most of the way and heavy work all the way. But I liked it because I felt as if I were Adam and owned the earth.

"Did you ever go where you could feel like Adam?" he asked suddenly. I could truthfully say, "No."

"Then you don't know how a man can feel.

"That is a curious thought—after you get used to it. At first it is too big. It makes the head swim. I go up sometimes into the mountains and see the rim of the earth turn up or down as it slips from over the sun or steals over it. Or I go out into the desert to feel the vastness of it and see the shadow of the globe on the sky and know that in all that

circle there is not a soul but myself—just myself and the wild creatures who follow the law of nature.

"I had been in there some months when it came to me that I'd better be taking my bearings so as to get some more grub and tobacco before winter. But when I started on the back trail I found there were places I had come up which I couldn't go down—not without losing Pinto, and I would not do that. So I just struck on to cross the whole range. This, too, was more than I had laid off, and for the first time in my life, since I left New York, I found I was lost. This didn't trouble me much, however, for it is appointed for man once to die, and it might as well be like Moses on a mountain-top as like a pig in a pen. I might have turned back, but every now and then I found nuggets that hadn't grown there and that I knew had been washed down from somewhere up ahead, or I got views that beat anything I ever dreamed of. So I kept on with old Pinto, climbing and climbing, until one morning we came to what I took to be the top of the range. But when I got there

it was but a step up like the rest; and there they were, range after range, stretching beyond me in blue waves of mountains, billow on billow, up to snow-capped peaks that held up the sky. And what I had taken to be a table-land was really only the level edge of the crater of an old volcano. But my soul! it was a vision! It reminded me of that saying, 'And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden.' There was a river that ran down from the snow above and divided into four streams, one of which ran into a lake and all about it were trees and flowers. Pinto, however, did not seem to be as interested as I was, and he began at once to snuff his way down to the water, with me at his heels, under a bower of lilacs of every hue. I had been so busy looking around at the flowers and thinking how like the Garden of Eden it was, and how peaceful it was, that I had not looked at the rocks, but when I sat down it was on a great bulge in the ledge that the volcano had once thrown up, and after a while I began to examine it. As soon as I saw it I knew what it was. It was gold. A great vein of gold, richer than any I ever saw, that

that volcano had pushed up there, and there it lay, a great stratum with one end bulging out and the other resting—in hell, I reckon.

"Well, for a while I couldn't think. Then my first thought was—if Ken had only lived—and then the others. Next I thought how I'd do when I got out. I'd go to New York and make those swine root at my feet for the gold I'd throw in their mire. I thought how I'd insult that railroad murderer, and I followed my fancy till I got sort of crazy to get there. Then it came to me that I might as well follow the lead and see how far it ran, so as to get an idea of how rich I was, for I allowed it would run $200,000 to the ton. I got on my feet and began to climb over it, and I must have gone a mile before it began to dip. I was right at the top of the rim and there was a little clump of pines and joshuas there, and as I looked under the shade of one I saw two piles that looked like ant-hills, except that they were rather too regular. I pushed up to them—and if they weren't gold! Two piles of gold as high as my shoulder that had been dug and piled there. My teeth began to chatter and before I knew it I had

jerked out my gun to kill anyone who would dispute my claim.

"The next minute, though, my breath stopped. On the other side of the clump lay two skeletons, and through the breast of one and through the ribs of the other were knives that told the story. A little farther off, where I found them later, were the skeletons of their horses and their kits and things. These two men had been chums for years—you might say like brothers—and together had come all that way, faced all the dangers and endured all the hardships that I had known, and then, in the hour of their triumph, when they were standing in sight of enough gold to buy a kingdom, they had killed each other over some petty difference arising out of their division. And the buzzards had picked their bones.

"I knew it all then, but it was not until that night that it came home to me in its full significance. I knew what it meant if I should return to the East with my new wealth, and all that night I rolled and tossed as I had not done since I left the city. And the next morning the pillilooeets came and gibed and shrilled their 'Pee-ahs' at me with their noses,

and the buzzards circled and watched and cocked their eyes down at me as they had done at thousands who have died for gold.

"I fought it out all that day, but that night when the darkness fell again, rolling down from the gray mountain-tops above me, and the stars came out and blinked down at me like the eyes of angels, waiting to know my decision, I reached it. I made up my mind to cut it and all that went along with it. I was free. Why should I go into slavery again? At the thought my soul revolted. The reek and the stench of the cities came back to me and turned my stomach. It all became clear to me that night under the silent stars. It seemed sort of to get in my blood. And presently I began to think of all that I had lost —of the comrades I used to have when I was tramping up and down in Virginia with no more than one frying-pan for a mess and a ragged blanket for two of us, fighting for something else than gold. I thought of those who had died for it. And then of little Ken, as he withered there in New York in that cursed Death-Valley atmosphere. And presently I began to feel that I had gotten along pretty well as

it was, and I began to count up what I would lose if I went back to that hell where I used to see men frying in their own fat. All the camps I loved up in the keen air on the mountain-tops came back to me, the desert with its wide warm places and silence and the deep gloom of the redwood forests where the light is tempered to the cool green like the depths of the sea; and at last I decided I'd just keep that gold there until I wanted it, and in the meantime I'd live as God meant me to live, and see the country God had made.

"To prove my gratitude to my two friends who had helped me to my decision I took their bones and buried them each in a pile of the gold that had caused their death; and as I did not know which was which, I drew lots to see which should have which. And there they lie now, each under a pile of gold that would have made Midas mad. I picked up enough gold to last me until I went back. It was a long and tedious trip, but after weeks of work I found my way out—and here I am, the richest man in all America if not in the world."

I glanced at him to see if he were not joking, but

his face was profoundly serious, and I became quite satisfied that he was mad.

"What do you call your mine?"

"I call it the Cain and Abel," he said, "after the two brothers who first found it. You see I consider them my sleeping partners and they have all the gold they want now."

He mused for a little while, but he soon began again.

"Yes, now I reckon I'm about the richest man in the world. I've ranches so big that it takes me months to get over them. My wheat fields stretch from the mountains all the way to the coast and my gardens bloom from one year's end to another. I have my art galleries, too, with such pictures as no artist but one ever painted, and they are all taken care of for me. The colors are from Him who made the heavens blue and stained these hills green, who paints the sunrise and sunset and spangled the sky with stars."

To get him off this subject I asked him how he managed in cold weather.

"Oh, I never get cold," he said, "I'm a nomad

like my ancestors. When I wish it I travel with the summer, but sometimes I love the keen, frosty air of the mountain ledges; it hardens me. I am like the water-ouzel; I love the storms and the waterfalls. And up there I make friends with God's creatures—from the big, lazy, amiable bears to the little scolding pillilooeets, who live on pine nuts and fresco the trees with their little claws."

"Do you ever kill them?" I asked.

"Me? No! Am I God to kill and to make alive?"

"I see you carry a pistol."

"Only for men. They are the only animals that prey on their own kind even when they are not hungry. Other animals kill in self-defence or for meat."

"But have you never thought that you might get ill?"

"Oh, yes. But I do not worry about it. It is appointed to man once to die. I shall not anticipate it. Whenever Death finds me I shall try to meet him pleasantly."

"No, but I mean if you fall ill?"

"Oh, most illness is the fruit of the life fools live. Over there in the old mission I have a cupboard if I ever want to shut myself up, and up the canyon I have a friend or two who understand me and let me roam about without attempting to hobble me or weary me with futilities. And in various places I have ranches where they would be glad to give me a corner, for the sake of the little, dirty, sunburned children who know me. But when I die I want to die under the open sky. No peering fools to treat me with contempt; rather let the buzzards have me. I'm going down now to see my orchards in the Santa Clara Valley: miles of white bloom. Have you ever seen them?"

I told him, "No," but that I had heard of them, and then to test him and partly to humor him, I asked, "Are all those yours?"

"Yes," he answered. "I let others work them and I just enjoy them. That's reasonable, ain't it?"

It seemed to me so at the moment. But when I had said good-by, and was coming back to town, after asking him to let me take him some tobacco

the next day, I began to be a little befogged about him.

When I returned next day, to my disappointment he was not there; but in a cleft in the rock against which he had leaned was a small package with a note addressed to me on the card I had given him; and in the package were a handful of specimens of almost pure gold, which he said he had left because I seemed "rather poor." I took the specimens and showed them to a scientific man whom I had met in the town and who did some assaying there.

"Where did you get them?" he asked in wonder.

"An old fellow gave them to me."

"So you have seen him?"

"Yes. Who is he?"

"No one knows. He calls himself 'a brother to Diogenes.' Some think him mad, and, perhaps, he is. I don't know."

"What is that?"

"Gold."

"How pure?"

"Almost pure. It has a little sulphur mixed with it. He evidently knows where there is a gold mine.

Probably he gets it and puts it through a crude smelting process. See, this has been in the fire."

"He says it came from a volcano."

"I don't know. No one does. Attempts have been made to follow him, but he is too keen for that; he has had great offers, which he laughs at. Some think he is in league with the devil."

"He seemed to be a harmless old lunatic."

"Yes. But he talks reasonably enough. You were in great luck to get any of his nuggets. He usually gives only to the poor. He must be mad."

A GOTH

A GOTH

I HAD known him when he first came to town from the backwoods, a strapping, big, raw, long-haired, shaggy country boy, so green that it is a wonder the cows had not eaten him, and without a cent in his pocket. And now he was in the papers of two continents, spoken of by some with that respect which the possession of mysterious millions usually exacts, as "a power in the financial world"; assailed by others with bitterness as a "pirate" or "highwayman" who lived but to upset values, destroy markets, and batten on the fortunes of the investors he had wrecked. Whichever he was, he had become in the twenty years that had passed since I had last seen him one of the most interesting, if disreputable, figures in commercial life, and had thus verified a brazen prediction which he had made when he first appeared in our little boarding-house company with his red head, worn clothes, and patched shoes. Long-limbed, big-jointed, and bony,

with his clothes too tight and too short where he had outgrown them, he became at first a sort of butt in the boarding-house. His cheek-bones were high, his mouth and nose big; his eyes, deep blue, had an expression of singular candor in them like that of a boy's, and when his bull-dog chin was set you might as well have tried to move the bow of Ulysses. These were his weapons of offence and defence. He quickly put an end to any tendency to ridicule on the part of his fellow boarders; for he was as choleric as a poodle and as nervy as a game-cock and within a week he had "called down" the two best men in the company. He was never cast down, never confounded, and he was, in a sort, liked by most of us, for he was polite when he was treated civilly, and he was universally respectful to women.

He had one besetting sin. He was a born gambler, and when he came to grief I helped him out, and it was my loan—offered, not asked for—that pulled him out of a trouble more serious than I had dreamed of. He told me afterward that he would have killed himself if he had not been afraid of hell, and if he had not been unwilling to leave the girl he

was in love with—two curiously different motives. And he showed me her picture, a photograph of an apple-cheeked country girl without a trace of distinction. He declared her to be the most beautiful creature in the world, and vowed that some day he would dress her in "black silk and diamonds."

It was this episode, perhaps, which made Dorman remember me now when, after twenty years, our eyes met in the Café La Belle, that gay rendezvous of the gay life of Nice. A movement in the brilliant *parterre* of hats before me opened a vista, and there, at the end of it, seated at table with several ladies, who, though for the most part, fashionably coifed and gorgeously dressed, appeared rather out of place, was my old friend and former *protége*. I knew him at once. After two seconds of puzzled reminiscence, due, he told me frankly, to his astonishment at seeing *me* in Nice, he knew me too, and without a word he pushed back his chair and came striding toward me with open mouth and outstretched hands, shouting his welcome. There was no doubt of his sincerity, and people turned and looked at him with his great bulk surmounted by his fine head with its

tawny mane. He was evidently not unknown, at least to the men; for a number of them spoke to their companions, who thereupon put up their lorgnons and gazed at him with renewed curiosity.

I was unfeignedly glad to see him. He was the first compatriot I had seen since my arrival the evening before on the Sud Express, except, indeed, one whom I could scarcely reckon as such, so completely was he disguised in foreign manners, imitations, and affectations. This young man was the son of a man of great wealth, known in the world for his money, who, on his part, was the son of a man of great ability, who had made the wealth. The grandfather had founded huge enterprises and amassed thereby a large fortune; the father carried on the enterprises and increased the fortune largely; and now the son, who had been pampered and spoiled from his golden cradle up, was spending the money by every method which occurred to the idle brain of a youth of some little intellect, extraordinary knowledge of gay life for a man of his years, and as much folly as could well be packed into one frame somewhat burdened by rather unusual good looks.

I had known of the grandfather, old Sam Newman, when he was at the zenith of his power. It was he who had recognized the capabilities of my friend when he had left our little circle for the wider field of the commercial metropolis, and had utilized his forces there, giving him his start. I had known the father when he was considered the exponent of wealth and its capabilities, and I had casually met the young man, Sellaby Newman, when he was beginning to be known as a candidate for the honor of being esteemed the wildest example of a wild and dissipated set. Since then he had more than fulfilled his early promise, and had achieved what his own set of young fools were said to envy him: an almost international reputation for reckless debauchery. I might not have known him now had not his name been prominently before the public of late as the *quasi*-hero of a somewhat unsavory scandal connected with the name of a *danseuse* of much vaunted beauty and unusual recklessness. I had seen her a week before in Paris, carrying an audience by storm; and now when she came sailing into the *café* with all the gorgeousness of a bird of

rarest plumage and with the beauty which was undeniably hers she attracted the attention of the entire company. At her side, handing her along with a certain insolence of air and a trick of the eyes and shoulders which he had caught in his wanderings, was the young spendthrift, Sellaby Newman, and I think I should have known him even had not his name been muttered from half a dozen tables near me. The tone was far from friendly and the term "*Américain*" was used a number of times as an epithet.

After he had taken his seat he glanced my way with an air of studied unconcern and his eyes, or rather, the one which was not obscured by a monocle, fell into mine; but evidently my face recalled no recollection—at least, none which he was willing to harbor. He half turned to his companion and muttered some observation at which her carmined lips barely parted.

It was at that minute that I first saw my old friend, Dorman, across the room, and he came striding between the tables toward me. I was, I confess, a trifle embarrassed at such a public declaration of my virtues as he gave; but he was as ob-

livious of everything else as though he had been in a desert.

Nothing would satisfy him but I must come to his table and dine with him. My declaration that I had ordered my dinner had no effect. I must dine again. "Come along. I will show you a real dinner. You don't know what a dinner is. This isn't the old boarding-house. Mme. M. has the best chef in Nice and he knows me well. Don't he, Joseph?" This to the sleek head-waiter who had followed him across the room and who now stood smiling obsequiously at his elbow.

So, I was taken across and introduced to his wife, a plain but pleasant looking little woman with gentle eyes and as destitute of waist as the Continent of Africa; overloaded with diamonds worth a king's ransom, even when kings were rated high.

"Mary," he said, as he called my name, "this is my old friend, Tom, of whom you have heard me talk so often." Mary's kind eyes betrayed an expression of vague anxiety. She was "very pleased to meet" me; as were the others to whom I was presented in turn.

"Are you a broker?" she inquired, evidently trying to place me.

"A broker! No," burst in her husband; "this is the man who, when I was broke that time—the first time—down in the country—gave me the money to square up and gave me that good advice about gambling that I've never forgotten." This to me, looking me full in the face, who had read, within two months, of one of the greatest gambling deals that Wall Street had known in years, put through by the sheer nerve of the man before me.

Mary, however, took it as he meant her to take it. Her eyes softened. "Oh, yes," she knew now, and was "mightily obliged" to me, she was sure. But for me William might never have gotten up. He had profited by my advice. He had often told her so. He laid all his good fortune to having followed it.

William's blue eyes were on me blandly.

"No, not all, Mary," he said with sincerity. "I must give you credit for some." And again his eyes met mine with that candor which was like a boy's and which had cost so many men so much.

The other ladies at the table were his sister-in-law

and his "Cousin Jane," the last very like him, but with a certain refinement which the rest lacked, and with a twitch of humor about her wide, strong mouth which showed that William Dorman had not deceived her.

The dinner was all that he had promised, and before we were through, Mme. M. came in in her quaint costume, tightly laced over her buxom figure, touched off with jewels, and beamed on us out of her handsome eyes which had once, so report said, ensnared one of the most celebrated men of France; and Dorman drank her health in "the best bottle of wine in Europe," as he declared.

As we dined he told me something of his history—of the struggle he had made, the difficulties he had encountered, and the reverses he had suffered; in all of which, he said, Mary had stood by him, like the trump she was. And as he talked and ate and drank —enormously—he recounted his experiences with the same zest with which he drained his champagne.

He certainly was not modest. His boasting, however, was relieved by his grim humor. In the midst of his relation of some *coup* which had cost

him or someone else a million or more, he would burst out into real laughter over the recollection of the ridiculous figure he used to cut in the boarding-house in his short breeches and his patched coat.

"By Jove! they were worth a good pile to me, too!" he declared. "I played them in New York against some of those slick fellows till they were more threadbare than they ever were in the old boarding-house. I used to look dull and talk like a country-man until they tumbled to it and began to shy off when I put on my country-boy air."

He had been office boy, telegraph operator, book-keeper, confidential clerk, general factotum: "pretty much everything, in fact," he said, "from head-man to little dog under the wagon.

"I didn't keep a place long," he laughed; "I was just learnin'. I learnt telegraphin' so 's I could send my own ciphers and take theirs; bookkeepin' so 's I could tell where I stood and how they stood; but I could carry a whole set of books in my head then. I took a private-secretaryship so as to get a good gauge of a man I wanted to gauge—and I got it."

He chuckled at a reminiscence and then broke out: "I'll tell you about it. I had got in with the old man." He named the grandfather of the young spendthrift at the table across the room with the *danseuse*. "He liked me because I was smart and could look dull, and because I could do twice as much work as most men. He knew I was smart and he thought he could use me and fool me too—that was his way. Oh, he was a keen one! There was where I got my real start." He threw back his head and laughed. "You see I had learnt all his ciphers and I could read 'em almost at sight, and he didn't know that I could even telegraph. So that gave me considerable advantage. Then, when I threw up the secretaryship he wanted to know what I was going to do. Told him I'd let him know soon. I'd already done it. I staked every dollar on the ace—and won."

His wife turned and laid her hand on his arm. "Now, William, you are talking about those cards again."

"Oh, no! I'm not. I'm only talking about those I used to play." This seemed to satisfy her, for

she turned to me with a pleasant smile. "You know he used to play cards right smart; but——"

"But now I've seen the error of my ways," he said quickly with a candid look at me, and then added, "The man that would deceive as good a woman as that ought to be damned—I'll be d——d if he oughtn't!"

Without giving me time to reflect on this bit of casuistry he swept on, giving me a glimpse of his career and methods which was certainly startling and at times astounding. He had often been hard pushed, sometimes to the very wall, at times much worse than insolvent. "But I always knew I'd win out," he declared vehemently. "You see, I always paid in the end, with interest; so that, at last, I could always get staked. I was often destroyed, but never cast down, and they never knew it. And that little woman there—" He looked at his wife, with a nod and smile of real affection, and she blushed like a delighted girl—"she stood by me like a brick. When I was up, she wore *my* diamonds, and when I was down, she gave me *hers*."

"And why not?" she said simply.

Her husband smiled and went on: "Till at last we began to be really somebody. By the time they had me stretched out and nailed to the floor with a stake through my body some five or six dozen times, they began to find I was really alive, and then they began to come around. Oh, I know 'em, the snivelling hounds! they fawn on you when you are up and fall on you and try to tear you to pieces when you are down. But no one ever heard me whine when I was hit or knew me to hector when I was up. It is when I am down that I bluster. *You* know that," he said, with a glint of a smile in his blue eyes; "and I have bluffed many a one.

"But my biggest bluff was my Wheat Deal. I'll tell you about it. I was young then, but it made me old. And it came mighty near settling my hash." He cast his eye just half-way toward his wife, and I asked him how it was. "You mean you went broke?"

"Oh, no!" he laughed; "I *was* broke, but that wa'n't anything. I was generally broke those days. But by pawning everything we had and brazening it out, and knowing where every bushel of wheat was

on the earth—every bushel, mind you—and just how long it would take to get it to market, I pulled it off. But, by Heaven! it made me old. Any fool can make a corner, but it takes a strong head to get out of it yourself."

"Well, you had good luck. Very few men have tried that and come out safe."

"She saved me." He nodded over towards his wife. "And it cost me a cool million dollars, too."

"How was that?"

"Why, the gang who had been trying for weeks to skin me waked up one day to find that judgment-day had come. I had closed out every bushel and had gone home to go to sleep, which I needed mightily, when they began to roll in. She, there, had known something big was up by the way I acted: figgerin' and cussin' and fumin' and drinkin' coffee and not sleepin' a wink sometimes all night, and she hadn't liked it any too much while it was goin' on. But when I came home and told her it was all right and I had got out safe, she said: 'Thank God! Well now, William, I don't want you to do that sort of thing any more, no, not for three millions.'—I

had told her I had made three millions.—But she thought three millions was a good, comfortable sum, too. Her father had made three hundred and fifty dollars once on his wheat crop, and whenever I made anything on wheat, which I had done several times, a few hundred thousand or so, she had always brought up those three hundred and fifty, and I never could make her feel that mine was so much more till I put on a few hundreds and sixty or seventy odd besides. She understood it all right, but she could'nt feel it. In fact, she hasn't much confidence in any arithmetic that she can't do on her fingers; but, by Jove! she can do the addition with those fingers—they just fly.

"Well, as I say, I hadn't more than got home when they began to come in, pleadin' the baby-act, with white faces and shakin' chins, to tell me they was busted—the whole d——d gang—cleaned up, as though I did'nt know it. They had looked into the pit of hell expecting to see me sizzling there and found out 'twas themselves. I knew 'em, and knew what every one of 'em was worth, an' what they were, too, down in the bottom of their souls. Some

of 'em were good fellows, too; but they didn't know how to play the game. Others knew how to play it, but got caught and come to tell me so, like men—not to whine. Well, I never had it in me to be hard on a man when he was down I never hit a man real hard but once—I mean since I was a boy, when I had to fight pretty hard now and then—that was when a fellow, one day, knocked another one down and then began to kick him. Well, I reached over, and got a grab of his neck, and when I let him go, he kind of flopped down by the other in a lump—he didn't know whether he had a rib left stickin' to his backbone or not. So now, when they came rollin' in that away" (he always said "that away"), "I began to size 'em up and ask 'em how much they were worth. Well, so much. And how much 'd it take 'em to begin on again; would so much do it? 'Yes, indeed.' 'Well, I'll leave you that and I'll take the rest,' I'd say; and you ought to have seen 'em pearten up. It really was a big thing for 'em; for it saved 'em from liquidatin'. I got so in the way of doing it that when two or three of 'em come in who I knew had been layin' for me, I took the

high horse and let 'em off easy in the same way. One of 'em broke down and blubbered—said I was a white man after all, and he'd never say another word against me 's long as he lived. I came near tellin' him what a white-livered hound I knew he was, but I was feelin' kind o' good, and it was only when they'd all gone that I began to think, maybe, I'd been a blazed-faced fool to let 'em off that away. However, I was feelin' pretty virtuous and was thinkin' what a good, kind sort of fellow I was, when the door opened and in walked Mary. As soon as she come in, I knew there was something up, by the way she began. She just plumped herself right in front of me and opened up:

"'Why, Will-iam!' When she calls me 'Will-iam!' I have to look out. She generally calls me 'Popper' or 'Popsy' or 'Deary' or 'Billy.' But 'William' means business, and 'Will-iam!' means hell to pay. This time she says, 'Why, Will-iam, I am surprised! Is it possible!' Well, I was so stuck on myself that for a minute when she said she'd been listening and was surprised, I thought she must be put out at my bein' so generous.

But 'twarn't but a minute; for in a second, she was just goin' it: head up, cheeks flamin', eyes blazin', body straight and stiff as a poplar and words acomin' about five hundred to the minute. 'Why, William,' she says, 'you've been gamblin'—gamblin'! and you told me, and I was foolish enough to believe you, 't you'd been "buyin' wheat." Well, for a while I thought I'd brazen it out, but no good. 'What if they were "tryin' to do you?" What if they were "in a clique to rob you?" Is that any reason why you should rob them? I know you are smarter than they. I knew you were smarter than anybody else when I married you, but I also thought you were honester, too! Because a thief is layin' for *you* to rob you, is that any reason why you should lay for him and rob *him?* You know what that makes you? I am ashamed to hear you use such a—a—dishonest argument.'

"Well, sir, I tried to recoup by pretending to be mad, but it didn't work,—no sir, she had the call on that, and she played it well, I tell you. 'I am an honest woman,' she says, 'and my father was an honest man and—' 'Oh, yes!' I says, 'I know, and

he made three hundred and fifty dollars on his wheat-crop one year!' I says, 'and here I've made three millions on wheat and you are abusing me like a pickpocket.' 'Yes,' she says, cutting in and getting sort of high and mighty, 'and that's what you are—by your own confession—a *pick*pocket—justified to yourself because you've picked the pockets of other pickpockets. No use of your sneerin' at my father!' she says, 'He was an honest man and he wouldn't have made a dollar dishonestly, not for three millions, and I thought when I married you that I was marrying an honest man.'

"'Well, so I am,' I says.

"'I thought so till to-night,' she says. 'But now—' I waited for her to finish; but she just steadied herself and looked at me straight and clear; 'I am an honest woman; I have tried to live so and I mean to die so, and as God is in Heaven, I will take my children and go back home and live down there with them.'

"'Now, look ahere, Mary; be reasonable,' I says; for I saw she meant it. When she gets that way she always says '*my* children,' she don't allow me a

hair of 'em. 'I will,' she says, 'as God is my Maker. I don't mean them to be brought up by a gambler.'

"'Mary,' I says—

"'And I will take them away and try to bring them up honest, at least—however poor they may be, unless you'll pay every one of those men who came here to-night what you've won from 'em and give me your word of honor that you won't ever again as long as you live gamble in wheat.'

"'How long will you give me?' I says.

"'Just till I can get this ring off my hand,' she says. And by——! you know, she began to tug at my wedding-ring.

"'I promise,' I says, and I said it d——d quick, too; for I saw my finish right there.

"'Your word of honor as a gentleman?' she says, looking right through me.

"'Yes, my word of honor as a gentleman, I'll never gamble in wheat again.' And I've kept it, too, for I never gave my word of honor to anyone and broke it. I was glad to get off so easy, too; for the cold sweat was breakin' out on me when I saw her

tuggin' at that ring. I was glad she was fat that night."

The dinner was about over, and I must say it had been one of the best I ever ate. He showed a surprising knowledge not only of the cookery, but of the cooks themselves. At one time, he had every high official in the café at the back of his chair, and was telling them just how he wanted a certain dish cooked.

He suddenly branched off.

"Have you ever seen Nice?"

I said I had seen something of it when I spent a winter there.

"Oh! I don't mean that," he said, with a touch of his old arrogance. "You saw only the streets and the cafés where boys go——"

"Well, not altogether," I interrupted; but he swept on.

"I mean the real Nice, the Nice of men and—of fools," he added. "You come with me, and I'll show you."

"My dear," he said, turning to his wife, "my old friend wants me to show him a little of Nice, so I

am going out with him for a little while. Don't be disturbed about me if I should be out late."

"Well, I'll try not; but don't be out too late, dear," she said, with a look of idolatry at him and of some misgiving at me.

It was just then that young Newman, in pearl shirt-studs, monocle and frizzled mustache, passed us with his beautiful companion, all glittering in pearls and diamonds. As I stood face to face with him, I bowed and he barely lowered his eyelids; but he bowed to my friend, and I thought half-paused to bow to his wife. But if he had this idea, he thought better of it; for Dorman looked him straight in the eye, with a sudden contraction of his own that made him look dangerous. His return to Newman's "*Bon soir, m'sieur,*" was a grunt that sounded as though it might burst into a roar. The other passed on and a good deal of his haughty assumption seemed to have fallen under our table.

"Who is that?" asked Mrs. Dorman.

"Oh! just a damned little fool who ought to be in an idiot asylum," said her husband easily

A half hour later, having dropped his wife and

cousin at their hotel, his carriage stopped at a fine establishment in the Place de Messina, and a minute later we climbed the great marble stairway, and, having left our coats in the hands of an attendant whom my friend called, "Emil," he ushered me into the great apartments of the club, a miracle of gilding and marble and frescoes, resembling an old Venetian palace.

His entrance created what might without exaggeration be called a sensation. Perhaps, two hundred or more men and nearly as many women were present, seated or standing about the tables where the regular game was going on. At the mention of my friend's name, however, there was a stir all through the room, and nearly every eye was turned on him, while a good many of the *habitués* greeted him, and gathered around him. He was evidently a man of consequence among them, and to my surprise he spoke French, if not well, at least with great fluency, never hesitating a moment or staggering at any rule of grammar. Even the stony faces of the *croupiers* changed and took on something of a human expression as he greeted them in hearty, if

execrable French: "Eh! bien—braves garçons; comment va 'ça c'longtemps? Très bien? Ah! bien."

Then in English to me, over his shoulder, "I'll show these Frenchmen a thing or two in a few minutes. You watch. I'll rattle 'em, till they look like old Step. Hopkins's signature to the Declaration of Independence." And without further ado, he made his way to the big baccarat table, and after a few minutes, took the banker's seat. He pulled out a wad of thousand-franc notes, which showed that his promise to Mary had been given a liberal construction and that he had come prepared for a big game. The stolid face of the *croupier* opposite actually looked interested.

From the start, the luck was against him, but the loser only grew the cheerier, and began to jolly his opponents to raise the bets. They soon became so large and his losses were so constant, that many who had at first held back, began to edge into the game, betting on one side or the other, and soon the other tables were deserted.

I confess, that as he sat there with his solid bulk, his ruddy face and his cheerful air, his hat on the

back of his round head, a big black cigar in his mouth, I could not but feel that he was at least a full-blooded man; and as the thousands passed from his hands, I was aghast. His credit, however, seemed better than his luck; for, as often as he nodded to the money-changer in his cage for more cash, the checks were furnished—so far as I could see without the least reckoning, though, of course, a strict account was kept. He seemed to be making everyone rich, when luck, with its usual inconsistency, shifted. A few of the most noted high-players in France had come into the game. Bets that would have staggered Mary's confidence were being made on the turn of a card, and soon my friend was recouping himself from the most redoubted gamesters in Nice. As he had borne himself gallantly in his reverses, so now he began actually to be modest. He became more polite than I had ever seen him, his serene blue eyes softened and his manner grew almost polished. One of his opponents, a well-known plunger, Baron ——, after a persistent run of bad luck, pushed back his chair and bowed to him grandly; my friend scrib-

bled something on a card, and, with a bow which I would not have given him credit for, handed it to the banker at his back. Five minutes later, the Baron, with a nod and smile to him, resumed his seat and the deal began again, to end in the same way. Dorman had scribbled him a friendly note, asking permission to act as his banker for two hundred thousand francs.

It was just then that young Newman entered the apartment, and with a word to his gay companion, came up to the table. I saw my friend's face change, and, following his glance, knew the cause. The young man made his way to the table, with a slow, affected saunter, and insinuated his approach through the crowd, his monocle in his eye, a set simper on his face, exchanging bows with his acquaintances, who stared at him with half-amusement. As he approached the table, he made some observation over his shoulder to his companion, which caused a titter among those nearest him. I did not hear, or at least, I did not understand, but William's face hardened just a trifle, and when Newman spoke to him, he barely nodded. It seemed that he had said to the girl that if she would wait he would

keep his word and show her that the great banker was not so terrible after all, and all that was needed was a man to stand up to him to back him down.

In a moment he took a seat at the table, yielded him by an unlucky player, and asked for checks. My friend glanced at him.

"I don't play with boys."

The other flushed.

"I am not a boy—I will show you as I have shown some others," he added in French.

"Oh, well, of course," said my friend, and in a few moments they were really the only two playing in the room; the rest were mere spectators. It was a duel indeed. Newman was a high player, but fortune, like his companion, smiled on him only to betray him. At first the luck was with him, and there were many titters at Dorman's expense, as the pile of checks grew larger and larger before the younger man. But suddenly the wind of fortune veered. My friend's perfect coolness exasperated the other, and he soon began to plunge. Dorman, with inscrutable eyes, dealt the cards like clockwork, and the broad, sword-like paddles lifted the winnings

and deftly distributed them about the table, sweeping the major part into the pile in the middle, till the banker's net winnings were up in the hundreds of thousands. Suddenly the younger man threw his head back and said "Banco." A gasp ran around the table and every other player drew his money back across the line. It meant that Newman would play for the entire stake on the table. Dorman glanced at him with a curious light in his eyes, and then as Newman met his gaze he dealt the cards. Newman hesitated, and Dorman's lips opened. "Withdraw." Newman's reply was to examine his cards, and just as Dorman offered him a third card lay a trey and a five on the table. Dorman, of course, had to keep the card himself. He exposed his hand and had a nine. The last card was an ace. Newman almost reeled in his seat. His hand shook as he took the glass of *fine champagne* which he had asked for. Stimulated by the *cognac*, he called for another bank. After a moment of reflection, my friend took him up and again won—the biggest stake ever played in the club. By this time everyone was crowded around, some on chairs, peer-

ing over the shoulders of those in front, the *danseuse* paling, even through her delicate rouge, and standing frigidly at Newman's back. Newman, by this time perfectly wild, insisted upon again doubling the bet. My friend looked at him with a warning light in his blue eyes, and I wondered what he would do. Then he shook his head, put a fresh cigar in his mouth, and rose slowly from his chair. The younger man turned as white as death, and began to bluster. My friend watched him with amusement, while the *croupier*, at a nod, filled his silk hat with the checks. Then deliberately taking a handful of long checks from the piled-up hat and with a nod of thanks chucking them over to the *croupier* opposite him, Dorman picked up his hat carefully and pushed back his arm-chair, suddenly turned, and leaning over the end of the table, threw the whole hatful into the younger man's face.

"I don't play with children," he said scornfully, "or if I do, I do not take their father's money."

He turned off unconcernedly and slowly made his way through the crowd. As I followed through the throng of excited, gesticulating, chattering, shouting

Latins, in the wake of the broad-shouldered, slow-moving, full-blooded, masterful man who had so astonished them, and who now passed through them as serene and unconcerned as though he were alone in one of the forests of his native hills, all sorts of expressions came to my ears. He was "extraordinair," "prodigieux," "épouvantable," etc. One of these struck me and stuck to me afterward. A smallish, dark man, with sharp black eyes and peaked nose, a curled and tightly waxed mustache over thin, bloodless lips, piped in a shrill, fife-like voice, "Mais, il est un Goth!" And he was right. On the instant stood revealed, as though he had blown down the ages, a pure Goth, unchanged in any essential since his fathers had left their forests and through all obstacles, even through ranks of Roman legionaries, sword in hand had hewn their way straight to the goal of their desires. He was a Goth in all his appetites and habits, a Goth unchanged, unfettered. True to his instincts, true to his traditions, fearing nothing, loving only his own, loving and hating with all his heart—a Goth.

As he tramped heavily down the broad marble

steps with the attendants bowing before him, I said, "Well?"

He took it as a question.

"D——d slow after the Stock Exchange! Then, after a moment's reflection: "That fool! no, not fool—he doesn't rise to the dignity of a fool—the d——d jackass! He is a disgrace to his family and his country. He an American! He ain't even a foreigner. He's a counterfeit—an empty-headed sham, dam', expatriated jackass! If he had dared to speak to my wife with that—that woman on his arm I'd have broke his neck, and he knew it. It's that sort of Americans that make me sick!"

He spat out his disgust.

Next morning Newman sent a friend to see him. I happened to call at the same time, and heard the challenge given. Dorman's reply was: "I neither play with children nor fight them. Tell him for me that it will be time enough for me to think about killing him when he pays me what he owes me."

As the second left the room, he repeated the phrase I had caught the night before: "Mais, il est un Goth!"

LEANDER'S LIGHT

LEANDER'S LIGHT

I

WHEN I first knew Rock Ledge Harbor, it was merely a little fishing village of gray, weather-beaten houses, occupied by weather-beaten people, apparently almost as much stranded as the old barnacle-plated wreck which lay in the small, circular harbor against the foundation of a long-since rotted pier. There were two ways of reaching it, one by the black, broad-beamed coaster which put in at odd times for cord-wood or lumber, and sometimes carried a few gallons of a liquid proscribed by the State laws, but much enjoyed by certain of the citizens; and the other by the ancient and rickety two-horse stage, a much decayed, dust-colored survivor of the old coaches which once ran on down-East through Portland, and bore the weekly news of the outside world. I chose the latter conveyance, and thus found myself one summer evening, after a

stately drive across the hills, deposited, bag and baggage, at the front steps of the one hotel, in appearance much like an ancient fort, crowning the rocky point which guarded the narrow mouth of the glassy river, and overlooking the placid harbor sleeping in a deep nook under the fading rose of a sunset sky.

I soon discovered that, far from the madding crowd, with a climate which in summer was unequalled, "The Harbor" was one of Nature's health-resorts. The air had the pungency of the pines, the freshness of the sea, and the balminess of the meadows. I reached there too late for the apple-blossoms; but the lilacs about the little white, gray, and yellow cottages were still in bloom, and the grass was all the greener for the lateness of the snow which had blanketed it until "the frost was out the ground," far on in April.

The "natives," as they called themselves, were a self-contained race. They had been settled there since Sir Ferdinando Gorges planted the colony, within a generation of the time that the "President of Virginia and Admiral of New England," Captain

John Smith, coasting the shores of North Virginia, gave his name to the rocky islands a few miles out. They felt that they owned the place, and they loved it; and they regarded the outer world with indifference, and new-comers like myself with proper scorn.

The "stage road" ran only to the Harbor from the "Village," a mile inland. Beyond the Harbor the only road was the grassy lane to the "North Farm," half a mile away. On this lane, in a little cove between the rocks, was a single house, a little "piggin" house, the homestead of old "Simmy" Goodman. It had been the home of the Goodmans for at least seven generations, as the inscriptions on the tombstones in the little square graveyard testified. Once the narrow peninsula, together with some of the cleared, cultivated fields lying beyond, had all belonged to one family; but when the division came, two generations back, other children had drawn the meadows and the "cleared" fields—cleared of rocks—and Simmy and his sister, who had taken their shares together, had drawn only the "rock pasture" overlooking the sea, and the little

homestead nestled in the small strip of cleared land above the cove.

"Always 'peared like pretty hard luck," said my informant, "Cap'n Spile," a stout old weather-beaten seaman who in his youth had been a whaler and sailed the Arctic seas, leaning lazily against the rail of the pier, with his blue eyes on the lines of a sail-boat slowly making her way up the quiet harbor. "Th' others got all the good land, and Simmy and Abby got nothin' but rocks and *view;* for the old house ain't much for these days. Not that anybody ever heared 'em say much about it. Abby al'ays liked *view*, and Simmy set a heap o' store by the house. But 't did look hard when the others had all the hay-land, and they marryin' and changin' their names, and Simmy and Abby, the only ones with the name, to have only the rocks."

It did look hard even to a new-comer.

According to Captain Spile, however, there were some people of late who actually wanted to come and buy some of Simmy's rocks, and his land was getting to be almost as valuable as a good field. "But Simmy ain't much of a hand for sellin'

land," the Captain added. And this I found later to be quite true.

All this was twenty years and more ago, and in this time the little village, with its dower of sunshine and sea air, had been discovered by others, and had changed from a straggling strip of small houses huddled under the elms about the harbor to a watering-place of some renown and expensiveness. Old Simmy himself, however, changed not a hair. Grizzled, taciturn, and stolid, he used to be always somewhere about his premises, "consortin' with" his big oxen, which he rather resembled in his slow, ruminant habits; sitting with the immobility of a sphinx in the door of his old barn; or standing by his stone wall, looking out over the sea in the afternoon—as the phrase went, "watching for Leander."

Leander, so I learned, was a brother who had sailed away sixty years before, and had never been heard of again. "But he ain't quite give him up yet," said Captain Spile. "I heared him say myself, comin' now forty-six year this June, that he looked for him every day, and aluz kept a light

burnin' for him. You go by the cliff-way any night, you'll find a light up-stairs in the window o' the sou'-east room ; 'tis what we call 'Leander's Light.' You can set a course by it comin' around Western Point, just as sure as you can by Boon-Light or the Nubble. I've seen it burnin' there many a night when he and Abby'd put out their own light soon 's the supper things were washed up. Abby's a right smart trial to him sometimes, I guess. She don't hold with it at all. Says Leander's been dead and in—wherever he's goin' to stay everlastingly—for many a year. But though Simmy gives in to her in most things, he never would in that; an' so, I s'pose, God preventin', that light 'll burn as long as his own does."

I had made the acquaintance of Miss Abby, a little, bent, sharp-featured, crippled woman, who sat most of the time in a roughly made wheel-chair of her brother's manufacture. Her tongue was as keen as her eyes, and they were like tacks. According to report, she was often as sharp to Simmy as to others; but, by Captain Spile's account, he never appeared to mind it any more than a large New-

foundland dog minds the barking of a fife-voiced fice. 'Twould drive most folks crazy," said the Captain; "but Simmy he don't even hear it. 'T is a right singular thing how a man can get used to a woman's tongue. Now, Job's wife would 'a' worn most men out—but Job and Simmy."

I myself had sometimes wondered if Simmy's stolidity were not assumed as a mask to guard him against his sister's penetrating shafts. At bottom she idolized him, as I found when Mr. Slagg, the new millionaire, tried to get hold of the Goodman place.

II

It is the belief of some that the true serpent entered into Eden when Eve began to dress up; and certain it is, that the idea of conforming to fashion has destroyed many a pleasant place since that time, and would go far toward destroying Paradise itself. This to early summer visitants to Rock Ledge like myself was the curse of the Harbor. Through the changes that took place among the summerites, after the railroad came, the natives pursued their

even course unchanged. They grew fat, many of them, on the pickings of the new summer visitors, and their houses put on new paint and what Miss Abby called "fancified verandas." But the people themselves remained unchanged, unvarnished, and natural. They looked on the summer visitors as "useful nuisances" and rather amusing barbarians. What services they rendered these visitors they charged well for; what pay they received they rendered good service for, and there it ended. When Captain Spile's sister, Mrs. Rowe, who laundered the clothes of a summer visitor, was approached with a complaint about too much "bluing," she told her: "I'll wash you and iron you, but I ain't goin' to take your sass; so you'd better get some one else to do it." When Miss Bowles, who answered to the name of "Frances," waited on the "mealers" at her cousin Mrs. Steep's boarding-house, and one of them called her "Fanny," she observed quietly, as she handed her the potatoes, "I don't care to be called pet names by the boarders."

In fact, they belonged to the soil, and were American to the backbone; a sterling people, like the

lichens on their rocks, without much color till one looked close, but then full of it.

Ensnared by the charm of the region, which captures most of those who set foot there during the witching season of summer, I had myself, soon after my discovery of the place, bought a modest piece of old Simmy's rock pasture, though it was only after a long negotiation and at a high figure that I secured it, not to mention certain conditions which I was fain to accept or give up hope of getting the land. His father, it appeared, had sometimes driven his cart down for kelp to a little shingle-covered cove on the piece I wished, and Simmy insisted that I must allow him to keep a right-of-way. I explained that while the road had been of service when he used the land for farming purposes, his land was now building-lots, and he no longer needed it. It was to no purpose. I had to yield to get the land at all, and, counselled by Captain Spile, I yielded.

After weeks of negotiation, all the conditions were agreed upon; I suggested that we should draw up a contract to stand until the deed could

be prepared and executed. This set the old man to ruminating.

"Why, *we* understand it, don't we?" he asked. "*You* ain't goin' to back out, be ye?"

When the deed was finally prepared, I asked him how he wanted his money. He pondered fully five minutes before he spoke.

"Well, *money's* good enough, I guess."

"All right; I can pay you in cash. I will get it at the bank. What denominations of notes do you want?"

"What what?"

"What denom—what sized notes?"

Again he pondered.

"Well, ones and twos will do."

So, I had to hand over more than $2000 in one- and two-dollar bills, and count them out for him on his table. It required over an hour. He handled and examined carefully through his old silver-rimmed spectacles each note as I counted it out, and then recounted and examined them all again.

This was before "the new Philistines" came, as Captain Spile called them.

The chief of these, whom the Captain later termed "Goliar," was a summer visitor by the name of Slagg, who bought of the Long estate the fine hill which rose behind old Simmy's homestead and overlooked his modest house, as it faced the sea. We "cottagers" had heard in the city that spring that something remarkable was going on at the Harbor, but when the old visitors returned in the summer, they found that a mansion, portentous in size and bearing, crowned the lofty knoll back from the sea, and that the Slagg place was stretching its massive stone walls like Briarean arms in every direction. According to some reports, it was the intention of the new-comer to change the Harbor once for all, and bring it fully abreast of the most fashionable watering-place on the coast.

It was even said that Mr. Slagg, the new cottager, had offered Simmy a fabulous price for his homestead, which lay between him and the sea, using the magic name of syndicate, and that the offer had been refused. I inquired of Simmy as to this, and he corroborated it in his quiet way.

"Well, somebody did say sump'n' about it,

but I told them that I didn't keer to sell any more.'

I had heard from Captain Spile at the pier that Simmy had said he didn't care about syndicates: they were "too much like a cuttle-fish"; also that Slagg had said he'd get the place yet.

However this was, the preparations of the new magnate went on amazingly. It was rumored that he was going to spend a great sum on his new place, and the outward and visible signs betokened that at least his expenditures would be lavish. Extensive purchases of land were made. The solid rock was blasted out for gardens and courts, and everything proposed was on a scale of magnificence hitherto undreamed of in that quiet region. There was even talk of his building a great sea-wall, so as to have a harbor for his yacht and for boats that usually seek the companionship of such craft. His stables were on an equally elaborate scale. He was credibly reported to have forty horses. Large trees were transplanted and put in spots that cut off the view, and the curious thing was that the stable was located in quite as prominent a position as the mansion. A

protest from neighbors, that the stable was offensively near their houses and interfered with their view, met with the undeniable statement that it was no more prominent from their houses than from his, and that he did not object to it.

To no one was the change more disturbing than to the occupants of the little piggin house just under the front wall of the grounds of the new cottage. The heavy hauling upon the roads had destroyed the pathway; the teams stood in the road and broke old Simmy's fence. But the real worry lay deeper than this. The new buildings overlooking them not only destroyed their privacy, but cut off their view of the rising hills to the westward with the flaming sunset-skies above them.

I observed on my return that summer that old Simmy had shifted his seat from the big chopping-block in the afternoon sun, where he had always been used to sit, and sat around the corner of his house; and that Miss Abby now had him roll her chair out on the front veranda, instead of basking in the sunny angle to the westward, where she used

to mend old Simmy's clothes. I never heard them explain the change, but once having heard from Captain Spile that "Abby was takin' on mightily about cuttin' off her view," I stopped on my way up the lane and asked her what she thought of the new mansion.

"'Pears to me," she said, "like they were takin' one of God's landscapes and makin' a painted picture of it. But it's none of *my* business. I suppose he's tryin' to forge something up there." She went on sewing with a surer stick of the needle.

Mr. Slagg, report said, had begun at an anvil, and by keeping on hammering had amassed a large fortune. His hammering, however, had of late years consisted of hammering the market, and his latest deal, by which he had "realized" —so the phrase went—millions of dollars, was regarded by many well-informed men as something rather close to robbery. In fact, a rumor had somehow gotten abroad that bogus reports had been issued. So, Miss Abby's innuendo had a double edge.

III

WHATEVER the fact was as to this, Slagg was one of the newly rich city-men who had sprung up like weeds from the ruin they had helped to make, and as he had only one aim—money,—so now he thought that money would accomplish anything. He looked like one of his iron pigs, a stout, roundish, oblong, heavy body on short legs; a rough, rather uncouth face in which glinted small, keen eyes; a big nose; and a coarse mouth above a strong chin. He was not lacking in humor or in good temper, but he lacked most things that they usually accompany. He boldly announced that he purposed to have everything that money could buy, and his conviction that "money would buy anything and everything."

The first shock to this view came from old Simmy. When Slagg first bought and laid out his place, he tried to buy old Simmy's little homestead, which any one who had been to Rock Ledge a summer well knew old Simmy would *not* sell, and in his first interview with the old man he sealed his fate, even if he might otherwise have had a chance. After the agent he

had sent to sound the old fellow had failed, he himself went to him, and when the high price he offered failed to move him, he tried to scare him with a threat of having his taxes raised. It was a threat that he had often worked successfully in his career, but this time he did not know his man. The old fellow shut up like one of the brown sea-urchins on the rocks below his house. Still, feeling sure of his method, Slagg went on building, confident that he would in time be able, as he said, "to squeeze the old man out," and he took no pains to conceal his plan.

Since the first moment he stood on his imposing front porch, he knew he must get rid of his unwished-for neighbor, or lose much of that for which he had striven. His front view commanded, instead of the blue sea with the surf breaking on the rocks and curving on the beach below, only old Simmy's little piggin house and bare chicken-yard. He once more made an offer, which he felt sure would be accepted, to Captain Spile, who expressed his doubts whether the old man would consider it. Slagg swore.

"Why, he'll jump at it like a dog—all that money, and he a Yankee."

"He don't want money," said the captain, leaning over the rail of the pier.

"Don't he! Everybody wants money."

"Well, most folks do; but old Simmy's got more now than he knows what to do with. He don't want any more."

"There ain't a man in the world 't don't want more," asserted Slagg, with conviction. "I know 'em. Ain't a man in New York won't sell his soul for money. I know 'em. I wish you'd go and see him for me."

"Wa-al, I'm pretty busy," drawled the Captain.

"Busy! I don't see that you do anything."

"I'm busy watchin' the river. Takes up all my time, pretty much, watchin' it fill and empty. It just fills up to empty again, like some folks; but some folks don't even know when they're full."

Slagg did not quite take in the old seaman's apothegm, but he went off growling about "getting his way yet." He had not got far when he turned back and asked me to dine with him, an invitation which I declined. As he walked away the old Captain followed him with his deep, clear eyes.

"What does he want to pay that money for? He owns the world now, don't he?"

And as I followed his glance, I could but acknowledge the fact.

"You city folks 've got a comical way of swapping victuals," he observed.

I nodded my acquiescence.

"Now, if I don't like a man, I don't like him; and if I don't like him, I ain't goin' to ask him to eat with me, and I surely ain't goin' to eat with him."

I agreed with him that there were a good many points of difference between him and the people he mentioned, and when he casually observed that his wife had a "fresh bakin' of doughnuts" that day, I was duly appreciative of the compliment, and accepted his invitation.

Slagg did not know old Simmy. And when his offers of more and more for the little place were met with the same stolid reply: "Don't keer to sell," he felt satisfied from his knowledge of men that this was only a clever ruse to "rob him," as he expressed it. He therefore sought an interview with old Simmy at which I happened to be present. Slagg was

shrewd, plausible, and persistent. Old Simmy was dull, calm, and sphinx-like. He met every proposition with silence or the simple statement: "Don't believe I keer to sell."

"Well, I guess you'll sell if you get a big enough offer?" said Slagg. "I'd sell anything I've got if a man—"

"Mebbe you would," said Simmy slowly.

"Yes, and so would you." And then Slagg, either to try him, or in earnest, offered him an exchange which was obviously to Simmy's pecuniary advantage.

"Don't believe I keer to change."

"Well, I will build you a new house, and make it look like something instead of that old rattletrap."

The old fellow turned and gazed silently at his bare, little house, and Slagg brightened.

"Why, it's a blot on the place."

Old Simmy, with his eyes half-vacantly on the house, wiped his horny hand across his rough face and kept silence.

"You won't do that!" exclaimed Slagg.

Simmy gave no further sign, and Slagg's patience suddenly gave out. "Well, I'm done with you; I've come here and doubled the value of your property, and offered you five times what it's worth, and you won't do anything. I tell you now, I'll never make you another offer."

"That's go-od," said Simmy, quietly.

"You think it's 'good,' do you? Well, you haven't done with me yet. Why, you block the way of progress in this whole town—you block Civilization!"

"Be you Civilization?" asked the old man so quietly that for a moment Slagg was nonplussed. Then he went off growling and threatening; but that evening old Simmy's reply was known about the pier.

IV

It was the next spring, after Slagg's new house was finished, that old Simmy's sister, Abby, died. I did not learn of it until I got back in the summer and fell in with Captain Spile at the pier. It was like picking up a newspaper-file after a long absence.

"Mr. Slagg he's back, too," he said, "in his Chromo Castle."

"Still wants Simmy's place, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes, he wants it—bad—and he'll keep on wantin' it."

"But now old Miss Abby's dead—?"

"He'll never git it now. I told him long ago he'd never git it, anyhow; but he thought he knew better. Abby sort o' mistrusted Simmy might git lonesome and git out; but—!" The Captain's eyes blinked with deep satisfaction.

"What was the matter with her?"

"Worry, Simmy says—havin' her view cut off—an' her chickens, an' all. You see, she'd always been feeble, and I think she didn't like the idea. But she went kind o' unlooked-for when she did go—'t wa'n't even the time of tide for her to go. She had lasted all winter, and had kept the house, and when spring come, Simmy thought 't would do her good to git her out-doors; so he wrapped her up and set her in the sun, and I think she took cold. But *he* says 't was Slagg's *house*, and worry for fear he'd sell her out: an' she told him she was cold, that

Slagg would soon own everything and force 'em out like he said; and, mebbe, after she was gone and buried, he would be like Naboth—an' wouldn't be able to hold out against him. And next mornin' she was dead."

"Well—Simmy?—I'll go an' see him. What did he say?"

The Captain was slowly whittling the pier rail beside him; so he replied with deliberation.

"Well, Simmy, you know, is a right religious man now,—he's tolerable old,—over eighty; though he wa'n't as much older than Abby as she said by ten years,—but when he was young he used to be a pretty hard blasphemer, an' fighter, too, I remember; an' I judge he'll hold out; that Slagg won't git that house, not in Simmy's time. Naboth's a pretty good hand at standin' Ahab off when he wants to.

"Money's a curious thing, ain't it?" he proceeded.

"Looks like some folks ain't strong enough to stand the strain—they git warped like green timber in a boat when you lay her up, now don't they? Now, our friend Slagg, 'thout his money, he wouldn't

be much more account than a chip in the porrich, an' he ain't so very much account with it."

Next time I talked with Simmy, the old man gave me a sudden insight into his heart.

"He wa-ants me to sell my haouse," he drawled in his deep bass; "says he'd sell anything he has. Wa-al, mebbe, *he* would. Tha-at haouse was built so long ago they ain't hardly a plank of the old haouse left—nothin' but the framin' and chimney, an' not too much o' that. My gran'mother—I mean my father's gran'mother—was in that haouse by herself the las' time the Injuns come down here. 'Twas at night, an' 't wa'n't a soul with her 'cept her baby and the dog. Her husband hed gone away to get the men together to drive 'em back, because they had heard they was comin'; an' they come that night before they was lookin' for 'em, an' my gran'-mother she heard 'em, an' she banked her fire, and tied her garter raound the dog's maouth to keep him from barkin', and set there in the dark, and suckled her baby to keep him quiet while the Injuns praowled all raound the haouse and pressed their noses to the winders, lookin' in to see if anybody was there; an'

then when they had gone, she slipped aout an' run down 'long that wall to L'ander Dunnell's block-haouse an' give the alarm, with her baby in her arms. I've heared my gran'father tell abaout it because he was the baby, an' he said if 't hedn't been for her the Injuns would 'a' massacreed 'em all."

He pondered for a little space, and then turned to me.

"I don't think they'd ought to try to drive me aout, do you? I ain't troublin' them, be I?"

My reply was, I fear, not wholly printable, but it appeared to reassure him.

"An' I ain't a-goin' to sell out," he added calmly. "That haouse was here before he come, an' I guess 't will be here after he goes."

It was after this that a new course was adopted—I will not say by Slagg, but by some of his people, and I think he could have stopped it had he been so minded.

Old Simmy found that the enmity of his neighbor was reflected in sundry annoying ways. Slagg, as he had threatened, first set to work to have his taxes

raised, and the appraisement was raised, as was really proper, from almost nothing—the old valuation as agricultural land to a valuation still far below its actual value. Next Slagg tried to get the high-road changed so as to make it run through old Simmy's yard, where a road had, no doubt, been in old times. In this he failed, though he offered to grade it at his own expense, and build a schoolhouse for the village—an attractive proposal in this age. What, however, worried old Simmy more than anything else was that when his chickens strayed across the road to Slagg's property they were killed by the latter's dogs and, Simmy said, by his men.

The old man spoke of it with a deeper light burning under his shaggy brows than I had ever seen there before.

"Them was Abby's chickens, and I don't think he had ought to kill 'em that way. He knowed that I would 'a' paid him dollar for dollar for every grain or spire o' grass or—weed they'd destroyed, because I tolt him so; leastways, sent him word I would."

"What did he say?"

"Said, 'Let him keep his d—d chickens aout of

my graounds'; 't he'd treated me lik a gentleman, an' I wouldn't be treated so. I s'pose that's what he calls 'treatin' like a gentleman.'"

He lapsed back into his habitual apathy; but after a moment added: "Looks like God must think mighty poorly o' riches by the folks he gives 'em to—don't you think so?"

I told him that Dean Swift had thought so.

"He's a stranger o' mine," he said.

V

Old Simmy's opportunity came sooner than he had expected.

The nearest way to the beach from Slagg's place was across Simmy's grounds. There was no regular path there, but neighbors frequently cut across the grass by his chicken-yard to reach the "fisherman's walk" on the shore. Slagg's men began to make a regular path across there, and when Simmy put up a notice for strangers to "keep off," it was pulled down—as Simmy believed, by Slagg's people.

It happened that one afternoon as I was crossing Simmy's grounds, Slagg himself came along with a

dog, and either supposing that Simmy, who was standing by his wall, gazing out over the sea, "lookin' for Leander," would not observe him, or, if he should, would be indifferent to his presence, he walked across Simmy's yard. Unfortunately, when he was about half-way across, the dog caught sight of Simmy's chickens, and there was immediate trouble.

In an instant the old man was upon him; but he was too late to save the chicken. He then turned upon the dog's owner and denounced him for setting his dog upon his fowls. This Slagg stoutly denied, and said that he had called the dog off. He offered to pay fifty cents for the chicken, which he said was twice as much as it was worth. Simmy, however, refused it with scorn, and ordered him to turn and go back off his place by the way he had come.

This angered Slagg, and in a rage he began to curse the old man, declaring that he was glad of the chance to tell him what he thought of him as "an offensive old fool, who stood in everybody's way."

"I am goin' to stand in your way this time, an' keep you from crossin' my yard an' killin' Abby's

chickens, said Sammy. Now go back where you come from." He reached out his long arm and pointed down the hill.

"I will go off your place, but I will not go back," said Slagg. "Now get out of my way."

"Yes, you will, too," drawled Simmy. "You will go back." And he squared himself before the younger man.

In a sudden rage, Slagg caught him by his coat and jerked him out of the way. The next second he was sprawling flat on his back on the grass.

I had no idea that the old man could be so quick or could strike such a blow. He appeared suddenly transformed. Taking a step forward, he stood over his prostrate antagonist and looked down on him.

"Are you hurt?" he asked.

"Yes, of course, I am hurt," growled the other. "What did you hit me for that way?"

"Becuz you killed Abby's chickens an' tore my coat. Now git up an' go back the way you come, like I told you."

Slagg rose slowly to his feet, scowling at the old

man standing stolidly before him and, turning, went back down the path, growling his threats of vengeance.

At the trial afterward, the testimony was conflicting. Old Simmy still believed and testified that Slagg set the dog on the chicken that he killed. Slagg still stoutly denied this, and swore that he had called the dog off, and offered to pay for the fowl more than it was worth. The suit, however, was not for the chicken, but for something more. Old Simmy, tall, heavy, and dull-eyed, was the accused, and Slagg, with a black eye and bruised nose, was the prosecutor.

Old Simmy partly admitted the charge of assault, but pleaded provocation. The Court wisely let him tell his story in his own way, and all the facts came out, including the trouble about his property. He admitted that he had accused Slagg of killing his chickens, and he still accused him; also that he had told him that he should not pass through his place, and stated that Slagg had cursed him.

"And what did you do then?" he was asked.

"I didn't do nothin' right then," the old man

drawled. "I just stood in his way an' told him he mus' go back."

"And then?"

"Then? Then he took hold of me and tore my old coat." He looked down at it.

"Was that the same coat you have on now?" asked Slagg's lawyer.

"Yes."

The lawyer approached him and examined the coat closely.

"Wasn't it a very old coat?"

"Yes, a mite old."

"How old?"

"Wa-all, I don't know rightly just haow old. If Abby was livin', she could tell you. She made it."

The lawyer edged off the dangerous ground.

"Well, how did you feel when he put his hands on you—as you say? Didn't you feel very angry?"

Old Simmy pondered.

"No, I couldn't say as I did. I just felt sort o' warm."

"What! You knock a man down and don't feel angry?"

"No; just sort of tingly all over, as I hadn't felt in over fifty years." His deep eyes gave a sudden glint of enjoyment, and he straightened perceptibly, as the crowd laughed.

"But you knocked him down?"

"I hit him."

"And what did he do then?"

"Fell down—flat."

"And what did you do?"

"I told him to get up an' go back where he had come from, like I told him to do."

"And that was all that occurred?"

"No; he got up and went."

The manifest enjoyment of the crowd that packed the little court-room, was a proof of the popular feeling, and the law was clearly on old Simmy's side. Thus, the judgment was a just one.

Slagg, with his bulldog chin and his belief in the power of money, held on for some time.

"He can't live always," he said, "and I'll have it

yet. His heirs will have more sense than that old fool."

He was right about the old man. He did not hold on long. When we returned the following summer, one of the first things Captain Spile said to me down on the pier was, "Well, Leander's Light's out."

"Yes, I heard old Simmy was dead."

"Yes, he died trying to light it. The way we knew he was gone, Jesse Moulton's son was comin' in roun' Western Point one night an' noticed the light was out and give the alarm, and we found him settin' in his big chair, speechless, with the lamp-chimney broke on the floor by him. He must have dropped it when he had the stroke."

"I suppose 'Ahab' will get the place now?" I hazarded.

The captain's face wore a pleased look as he shook his head.

"No; Simmy's left it to the town—to keep."

When Slagg heard that old Simmy had died, he moved at once. But, as Captain Spile stated, the old fellow had left his homestead and property to

the town for a hospital or a school, and provided that it should belong to the town so long as his old house, or one as near like it as possible, should be kept standing.

Thus, as Simmy prophesied, while Slagg has moved on to other pastures, the old house still stands. And thus, "Leander's Light" burns on.

MY FRIEND THE DOCTOR

MY FRIEND THE DOCTOR

MY first visit to Rock Ledge, dozing under its big elms by the gray Atlantic, and my acquaintance with "Mrs. Dow's Jane" were due to John Graeme: "The Doctor," as we used to call him at college. I had received a telegram one day saying, "Come with me for a loaf on the Maine Coast," and I had "shut up shop" and joined him.

The Doctor was in some respects the queerest man of our time at college. He was, perhaps, not exactly the first man there, but he was easily the first man of our set. Other "Meds" were called Doctor; but whenever "*The* Doctor" was mentioned it was always understood that it was John Graeme. He was not especially brilliant, but he had a divine enthusiasm, absolute courage, and eyes never to be forgotten. An old doctor who knew him said of him once, "That young man will either be a quack or a leading physician." "The two are often the same," said John Graeme.

So, it was no surprise to us to find him now, ten years later, already one of the big doctors, and still with a fiery scorn for the fashionable element. He had the marks of independence: a broad brow, a wide, well-formed mouth, a big nose and a firm jaw. Added to these was a voice always clear, and, when tender, as sweet as a harp, and a manner which was simple, frank, and, without the least formality, with something of distinction in it. But more than these, I think the chief ground of John Graeme's position at college was that he thought for himself, which few of us did then, or, perhaps, do now and, so thinking, he presented everything just as he saw it. Moreover, he felt with every living creature.

Whilst the rest of us studied as a task; crammed for examination and learned like parrots, "The Doctor" studied as he liked, read for his own interest the text books which his fellow students tried to cram, and before he left college, whether he was discussing a dog-fight, a love affair, or the processes of a bone, we sat and listened to him because he threw light on it. In his last year he moved out of college and lived in "Dingy Bottom," one of the worst sections of the

town, in the worst street of that section, in a room over a dog-fancier's. It was set down merely to his idiosyncrasy, and his paper on "The Digestion of Young Puppies," was held by the faculty to be frivolous. He said he wrote of that because he had been raising puppies all his life and knew more about them than about babies. One of the faculty said he'd better become a "Vet," as his taste evidently lay that way, but the Doctor replied that he was going to practise on children, not on professors.

Dr. John has said since that this year among the puppies and babies of "Dingy Bottom" was, with one other experience, worth all the rest of his college course.

The other experience was this: "The Doctor" disappeared from public view for several days; he was not to be found at his room, and when he reappeared, his head was shaved as close as a prize-fighter's. Some said he had been on a spree; some said he had shaved his head as Demosthenes shaved his. "The Doctor" flushed a little, grinned and showed his big, white teeth. It turned out afterwards that diphtheria of a malignant type had broken

out in his suburb, and he had been nursing a family of poor children. When the Professor declared in class a few days later that a member of the class had been discovered to have been exposing himself to a virulent disease in a very reckless and foolhardy manner, there was a rustle all down the benches, and all eyes were turned on "The Doctor." John Graeme rose all his long length.

"Am I the person referred to?" he asked, his face at first white, then red, his voice trembling a little.

"Small-pox!" it was whispered, and we edged away.

"You are," declared the stout Professor coldly. "You had no right to go into a contagious case, and come back among the other students. You might have broken up the college."

"You have been misinformed."

The Professor frowned. "What do you say?"

"You have been misinformed; I have not exposed myself recklessly. I have attended a few diphtheria cases, but I have taken every precaution against exposing anyone else. I refer you to Dr. ——, whom I consulted." He mentioned the name of the biggest doctor in the city, and sat down.

It was known that evening that John Graeme had not only attended the cases, but had performed an operation in the middle of the night, which, the Doctor stated, alone saved the child's life.

From that time Dr. John was the leading man in the Med. Class.

When we left college, the rest of us settled in small places, or in the cities in which we lived. Such of us as were ambitious began to crawl up with fear and trembling; those who were not, dropped out of the race. Dr. John went straight to the biggest city to which his money would take him, and settled in one of the purlieus where he lived on bread and cheese, when—as he said—he could get cheese.

In a little while he got an appointment in a Children's Hospital, and the next thing we heard, it was rumored that he was performing difficult operations, and was writing papers for the medical journals which were attracting attention. It was in one of these papers, the one on "Bland Doctors," I believe, that he charged that while the investigation of Medical Science had advanced it pathologically, it had scarcely advanced it therapeutically at all, and

that many of the practitioners were worthy disciples of Dr. San Grado; that they were as much slaves of fashion as women were. This paper naturally attracted attention—indeed, so much attention that he lost his place in the Children's Hospital.

But when, a little later, an epidemic of typhus fever broke out in one of the most crowded tenement-house districts of the East Side, he volunteered first man to do the hospital work, a newspaper took up his cause, and he got back his position. Soon afterwards he wrote his work on "The Treatment of Children," and laid the foundation of his fame and fortune. Practice shortly began to pour in on him.

Of Fortune he was as scornful as of Fashion; for just as he was achieving both he suddenly turned over his office and his practice to a friend and left for Europe, where he spent several years in the Continental hospitals. Some said he was mad; others that he had followed across seas a young widow whose fortune was as well known as her beauty; one of the belles in the ultra-fashionable set of the city.

When he returned he was already famous. For

he had written another work that had become a standard authority.

All this by way of preface and to show what sort of man it was that dragged me away from my accustomed summer haunts to the little sun-steeped fishing village on the Maine coast, and plumped me down in Mrs. Dow's little gray cottage under the apple-trees where "Jane" lived, with "Miss Hazel."

I had not seen the Doctor since we left college until I drifted into his waiting-room one morning in the spring, and not then until I had waited for at least a dozen others to see him. Most of these had children with them, and I observed that all appeared somewhat cheered up when they left his office.

The last patient was a fashionably dressed and very handsome woman who had driven up to the door just before me in a brougham with a fine pair of horses and with two men in showy livery on the box. I had seen her as she swept across the sidewalk, and in the waiting-rooms I had a good chance to observe her. She had undeniable beauty, and her appointments were flawless; almost too much so, if

possible. A tall, statuesque creature, well fed, richly dressed and manifestly fully conscious of her attractions. About her breathed "the unconscious insolence of conscious wealth." At this moment she wore a dark cloth morning-suit with sables, which always give an air of sumptuousness to a handsome woman.

Her presence caused some excitement on the part of one or two of the ladies who were present. She was evidently known to them, and indeed she must have been known to thousands, for she was one in a thousand. As she waited her self-consciousness increased.

After a time her turn came and she was ushered into the office. I heard her greeting, half rallying: "Well, as you would not come to me I have had to pocket my pride and come to you."

If the Doctor made any reply I did not hear it, and I think he made none, for his face, which I saw plainly, was serious, almost to sadness, and I was struck by his gravity.

Ten minutes later the door opened again and he showed the lady out of his office as gravely as he had admitted her. Her air of self complacency had van-

ished; her confident tone had changed. I caught the last words of his reply to her parting speech, as she lingered at the door which he held for her.

"I have told you the only thing that will help her —and the alternative. You must take her where I directed and you must go with her." He spoke as if he knew that his command carried weight.

She paused for a moment, evidently considering, while he waited impassive. Then she said with an accent, part disappointment, part resignation, "Well, I suppose if I must, I must; but it is most inconvenient. You will come and see her before we go?"

He bowed and closed the door, and then came over to me. "Come in. So glad to see you." He led the way into his office.

As he closed the door he broke out: "These fashionable women! They are not fit to have children. 'Inconvenient' when her child's whole life is at stake!"

"Who was she?" I asked.

"Her name is Mrs. Durer. These women who have not time to look after their children!" He turned off with a growl.

I know that I must have shown surprise, for she was one of the reigning belles of the day, and her beauty was a part of the property of the whole country. Moreover, I had heard her name connected with his, when he had gone abroad some years before.

"She is one of the handsomest women I ever saw," I observed, tentatively.

"Yes, she has looks enough," said the Doctor, dryly, and changed the subject.

It was not long after this visit to the Doctor that I received one morning the telegram I have mentioned, inviting me to join him in a holiday on the Maine coast, an invitation which I promptly accepted; for the old ties that bound us held firmly.

The place which he had selected was a little village of white or gray cottages, clustered under great elms, on a rocky slope facing south, above a pretty little land-locked harbor, just big enough to hold the white-sailed sloops which, after bobbing up and down outside, came in to sleep like white-winged water-fowl on its placid surface; but happily, too small for the big yachts that slipped by outside the

Ledge which gave its name to the place. Thus, the life had been kept in a simpler key than at the very fashionable resorts further along the coast. "The natives," as they called themselves, were self-contained and content with their superior knowledge, and the summer visitors were as yet simple in their tastes, as they had need to be in that primal community, where, at that day, though now a change has come, the ocean was regarded by hotel keepers as supplanting lesser bath-tubs.

The place where we landed from the dusty and somewhat rickety stage, in the shank of a placid Summer afternoon, was not the fort-like one hotel, frowning on the Point, but Mrs. Dow's gray cottage, amid a cluster of big apple-trees, where for his own reasons, Doctor John had chosen to ensconce himself. He said it was because he liked the portrait of Captain Dow, a wonderful crayon which might have been made into a graven image without sin, which hung in the little parlor. Here Mrs. Dow, a determined woman of past middle age, aquiline nose and temper, ample figure and firm voice, dispensed a well-ordered and measured hospitality. For Mrs.

Dow measured everything. Through her gold spectacles set firmly on her high nose, a pair of keen eyes measured the world with infallible accuracy.

Though my friend declared that he selected this place to get away from silly women and finish his book, I quickly found out why he had really chosen this quiet corner of Rock Ledge, and avoided the hotel with its commanding position and long piazzas where, through the warm mornings, the summer boarders travelled back and forth in their yellow rockers and "cultivated their minds" or their acquaintances; and where it was said, ladies of literary tendency hung placards on their chairs, reading: "Please do not speak to me."

The only other boarder in Mrs. Dow's cottage was a little high-shouldered girl with a pinched face, glorified by a pair of wide and startlingly blue eyes that gazed at everything with singular intensity. She was a patient of the Doctor's and had come there by his orders. No one was with her except her governess, a spare and angular woman of middle age, with kind eyes and a minor note in her voice, who was conscientious to a degree and appeared to

have the "fear of Madame" always before her eyes. She had not been with her little charge long, having, as appeared, been engaged by Madame just before the child was sent to the country for her health by the direction of "a big doctor in town." This I learned from Mrs. Dow in the first conversation I had with that well-informed person.

The governess was almost as lonely as the little girl. This I learned from herself in the first conversation I had with her. We had come on her, the Doctor and I, the morning after our arrival, as we strolled, at his suggestion, down by the curving bit of beach, where the tide was licking the yellow sand with the placid motion of a tigress licking her flanks.

It was, however, as I quickly saw, not the Sea that my friend came to watch, but the children. A score or more of them were working like beavers in the sand, digging trenches; building forts, or running up and down, toiling almost as much at their amusements as if they had been grown people, while their nurses and governesses gossiped or screamed after them like so many gulls.

But apart from the ruddy children sat a little sickly-

looking girl, in all the panoply of stiff white muslin and lace, with her nurse by her side. As we came on her we saw her nurse turn and shake her up as a child shakes a limp doll to make her sit up straight. And for a few seconds the doll sat up. But the little weak back would bend, and the child sank down again with a look of utter weariness and despair which struck even me. Doctor John gave a deep growl like a huge mastiff, out of which I got something about "the fools who were allowed to live." And the next moment he was in front of the nurse, bending over the child and talking to her soothingly, asking her about her mamma, and her dolls, the puppy he had given her, and many other things besides. The governess appeared to be a trifle suspicious at first of this new old friend, but the Doctor quickly disposed of her. He announced that he was the child's doctor and had come down to see her.

This was the fact. Having learned that Mrs. Durer had taken the child down to the seaside as he had ordered, but had not remained with her, he had run down to see her himself. In a few minutes he had the little girl up in his arms showing her a ship just

coming in, and when he put her down it was to take her off with him on a hunt for shells.

Meantime he had felt the little twisted back and knew just how she stood.

"Why don't you let her play in the sand?" he demanded of the nurse when he brought her back.

"She don't care to play much these days, and she gets her dress so soiled."

The Doctor growled.

"I thought so."

When he came home it was to hold a conference with Mrs. Dow in a speckless kitchen, and that evening I heard that stern and unbending guardian of her own rights singing his praises to one of her serious-faced neighbors in terms of eulogy which would have surprised the departed Captain, whose name in the household was "Lishy Dow," and who, by report of Captain Spile, the local historian of Rock Ledge, had not always received unstinted praise from his spouse during his lifetime, though, as the Captain remarked, he "guessed he got all he deserved, for Lishy was one of 'em."

"He's dead, is he?" I inquired.

"Well, I didn't see him laid out," drawled the Captain; "but I know he's buried all right, for I helped to bury him."

But whatever he had been during his life, "Lishy Dow" always received the due meed of respect from Mrs. Dow, now that he was dead. Morning after morning she would tear the brown paper from the chops or leg of mutton which Josiah Martin, the young man from Gill Carver's, the meat-man, brought, and shove the meat back into his hands with the same phrase: "You take that back to Gill Carver, and tell him I say he needn't think he can sell such meat as that to Lishy Dow's widow just because Lishy Dow's dead and gone." And morning after morning, as Josiah started off with the meat, she would call him back and say, "Well, just wait a minute—I guess you might's well leave it to-day, as I'm obliged to have something for my folks to eat, but you tell Gill Carver he ought to be ashamed of himself to try to sell such meat as that to Lishy Dow's widow just because Lishy Dow's dead and gone."

A circumstance which I did not know of till later had contributed to the Doctor's popularity. As the

Doctor was in the back-yard talking to Mrs. Dow about his patient, he had seen a little half-crippled girl in a chair under an apple-tree playing with some scraps of stuff out of which she was making clothes for an old doll. Mrs. Dow caught the expression on his face and answered his inarticulate question.

"That's Jane."

"Is she yours?"

"Yes—my Milly's. She stays here mostly. Likes to stay with me, because I spoil her, I guess. Least, that's what Milly says. But she's so hapless, I don't see as no harm'll come of a little spoilin'. She can't play like other children, an' all she wants is to set still and sew. You'd ought to see how she can sew. Speak to the gentleman, Jane." For the Doctor was now at Jane's side on his knees examining her handiwork and incidentally the little bent figure among the old cushions.

"She can copy anything," pursued the grandmother with subdued pride, "and since she seen the fine fixins that little thing in the front room has, nothin' will appease her but she must copy 'em for her doll."

When Mrs. Dow, having allowed me a measure of reflected friendship, told me about it, she described how, all of a sudden she had seen that the Doctor had lost all interest in her; and from the time he caught sight of Jane had not heard a word she said to him.

"But I was really ashamed to let him see her so untidy. However, as I say, you can't raise children and chickens without dirt, and you know he said 'that's so.' And now, would you believe it, in five minutes there was Jane up in his lap, talkin' to him the same as if she had known him all her life, and she never one to say a word to nobody—not to my knowin'. I was that ashamed of his seein' that old broken doll, b'cause she's got a better one, but Milly won't let her play with it, and 't appears she likes that broken one best anyways. She calls her 'Miss Hazel,' because she says, she looks like 'Miss Hazel.' An' when I explained it to him, he said he liked it best, too, that he and Jane together'd mend it. Oh! I say! that man beats me! And he says he wants me to give him Jane for a little while, and he says he can make her like other

children, most. But I mustn't say a word about it to a soul. So I won't—not even to Milly. But won't that be grand? Do you think he can do it? Jane? Why, she ain't got anythin' to build on. But I'll say this: if anybody can, he can. I wish Lishy Dow had seen him—just handlin' her like a mother does her first baby, as if he was afraid she'd break in two, and yet just as easy! If anybody can, I believe he can."

I agreed to this.

After this there was quite a change in the establishment. The Doctor appeared to be so much taken up with the two children that he left me to my devices while he went off with them to play at keeping-house with "Miss Hazel," in a sunny nook between the rocks, where he had with his own hands helped them to fashion and fit up a little house out of old boards and other odds and ends. His first piece of surgery was the repair of the broken doll which he first put in stays and afterwards, to the great delight of the two children, in a little plaster jacket. I soon learned of this; Jane showed her to me, while little Carolyn looked on, and no trained

nurses ever got more pleasure out of exhibiting an improving patient. But I did not know until afterwards that the Doctor was treating Jane in the same way, and that whenever he paid a professional visit to the doll he also paid one to the little mistress, having secured her consent through his services to the doll.

The treatment of the little visitor he had found more difficulty in, as the governess stood in terror of Madame; and Madame had left strict injunctions that she was to play with no child whom she herself did not know. "Madame was *very* particular."

"Well, I have a playmate for her," said the Doctor, and he mentioned Jane.

"Oh! Sir, I couldn't let her play with her," protested the nurse. "It would be as much as my position is worth if I should let her play with vulgar children. Madame gave me positive orders——"

"Vulgar children, indeed!" snapped the Doctor. "There are no vulgar children. Vulgarity is a mark of a more advanced age. Madame is a fool, I know, but she is not such a fool as to object to what I prescribe. Between you, you are killing that child, and

you will not keep your place a week after you have killed her."

Whatever the means were, the woman's scruples appeared to have been overcome; for in a few days the two little girls were, as I have related, inseparable companions, and even I could see the improvement in the little visitor's appearance.

After this I was privileged as a friend of the Doctor's to attend one or two of the "parties" given in "Miss Hazel's house," as the little place which the Doctor had fitted up for them between the rocks was called; and I got an idea of the Doctor's skill in the handling of children. There was a great deal of formality where "Miss Hazel" was concerned, and that ancient and battered lady had to answer a good many questions about her health and that of her friends—as to whether the plaster jacket hurt her, and how long she could remain strapped on her board without too much pain, etc.

"Miss Hazel" had in some way been promoted through the medium of a husband lost at sea and known among the trio as "The Late Lamented," and was, under the Doctor's skilful necromancy, a de-

voted invalid aunt, whose only joy in life were her two nieces, two young ladies who had unhappily inherited the Hazel back. This was the Doctor's invention as it was his care to attend the entire Hazel family. And it was amusing to see this long-limbed, broad-shouldered man, sitting day after day, carrying on conversations with the span-long doll about her two nieces and their future, while the wan-faced little creatures listened with their eager eyes dancing at the pictures he conjured up of their future gaieties and triumphs.

When they came home in the afternoon, grimy and happy, with faint traces of color in their wan cheeks, Mrs. Dow unbent and gave us her best preserves in sheer happiness. Even the nurse admitted that her charge ate more, slept more soundly and was better than she had ever seen her.

They not only played in the present; but planned for great entertainments when Mrs. Durer should come down—a date to which her little girl was always looking forward and leading Jane to look forward to also. And sometimes they played that "the beautiful lady," as they called her, had come, and

Carolyn would pretend that she herself was her Mamma and act her part as a lady bountiful.

I never saw the Doctor in such spirits. He entered into the game with as much zest as the children, and grew ruddy in the sea air.

"Pies are the real things!" he used to say. "These Yankees know their business. And of all pies—mud-pies are the best. Mrs. Dow is right; chickens and children must have dirt—*clean*, honest dirt—to play in to be healthy. If that woman will keep away long enough, I'll give that child a chance for her life."

"You do not appear to hold the lady in quite the esteem the world gives you credit for?" I hazarded.

He gave a grunt, and a grim expression settled about his mouth. After a moment of reflection, he added: "Oh! she's well enough in a way—as good as most of those about her, I fancy. But it's the system—the life. It's all wrong—all wrong! Why, the womanliness—the motherhood is all squeezed out of them. I don't suppose she ever put that child to sleep in her arms in her life. I have seen women weep and wail and almost die of heart-hunger be-

cause they have no children, and there are she and her like, trifling away their life in what they call their d—d society, while their babies perish or grow up to be like them. Why, I would not give that angular, hard-featured old Mrs. Dow, with her sharp tongue and true heart, for the whole race of them. She is real."

"She is rather crusty," I hazarded.

"Yes, but deep down under the crust she has a heart, and a woman without a heart is a monster."

"She must have a heart. She could not look as she does," I protested. I was still thinking of Mrs. Durer.

"She has no more heart than one of my instruments."

"She is so beautiful. I cannot quite accept your diagnosis. And the child appears to adore her."

"Yes she does," he said grimly. "And that is the worst thing I know about her; that she does not feel it. I'll vow! the Chinese way of destroying them at birth is preferable. It is at least swifter and more painless than casting them out as some women do."

"I think where children are concerned you may be prejudiced," I urged. The speech sent him off into a reverie, from which he came with a long-drawn breath.

"I trust so. I had a little sister once," he said slowly, "who one day when I was playing with her fell and hurt herself. My mother gave her life trying to save her. If we had had a doctor who knew more than a child she would have got well. Even if she had been let alone she might have done so. She went through tortures inflicted on her by a pedantic ignoramus, and died. Boy as I was, I thought it then and told him so. I know it now. I made up my mind then, that no other child who came within my reach should ever suffer as she had done; and that I would fight an unending battle against pedantry and pretence. And when I see a mother sacrificing her child to her pleasures I know just where to place her."

This ended the conversation. His face forbade further discussion. And when I saw him next time with his little patients, carefully examining first Miss Hazel and then Jane and the little boarder with a

touch as deft as a mother's, I knew the secret of his success, and I slipped quietly away.

My summer holiday ended before the Doctor felt inclined to leave his patients, and I left him there "keeping house" with Miss Hazel and the two young ladies, and waiting, as both the little Durer girl and Jane informed me, "to see how Miss Hazel's spine was coming on."

I learned afterwards from one of my friends, who was summering at Rock Ledge, that Mrs. Durer, towards September, about the end of the season at the fashionable summer resort, where she had her cottage, had run down to see her child and been wonderfully surprised and delighted at her improvement. "It's my opinion," said the lady who told me this, "that she was much more interested in that very good-looking and serious-minded doctor-friend of yours than she was in her little girl. She was always after him and he didn't care a button about her. In fact, he left as soon as she came down."

I learned also that an unfortunate misunderstand-

ing had arisen with Mrs. Dow, and Mrs. Durer had taken the little girl back to town.

It seems that Mrs. Durer, however much pleased with the improvement in her child's appearance, had very fixed views as to her social position and as to the children she should be permitted to play with. When she discovered that her child had been playing with Mrs. Dow's Jane, she threatened the governess with instant dismissal if it should ever occur again.

The result was natural. Both children wept bitterly and "Elishy Dow's widow" entered the lists. Mrs. Dow was calm to outward appearance; but the fire within burned deep. The grief of the children went to that member which she carefully guarded from public scrutiny; but which could be easily touched if one but knew the way to penetrate beneath the crust. And she nursed her smouldering wrath till Mrs. Durer crossed her path.

That lady drove up to the door the afternoon before she had arranged to return to her home, to explain that she would take her child away next day, and to raise some question about Mrs. Dow's account. She was dressed impressively, but it did not

impress Mrs. Dow. Mrs. Durer always declared afterwards that the woman insulted her because she would not permit her to rob her. She as little knew how exact that careful and scrupulous housewife was, as she knew the real cause of her sudden onslaught on her. A lioness whose den had been invaded and young injured would have been less ferocious.

Mrs. Durer began about the account that had been sent her; but the score Mrs. Dow had to settle was unwritten. She was simply distant and coldly hostile until Mrs. Durer, from her carriage, referred to her as "My good woman." A flash from behind Mrs. Dow's glasses might have warned her; but when she failed to heed it and asked after her "daughter—the unfortunate one—Joan, isn't that her name?" the lioness that had been crouching, sprang.

"I have no daughter of that name," said Mrs. Dow with a lift of her head, "and if I had, I don't know as it would matter to you whether she was unfortunate or not, seein' as you have one that appears a mite unfortunate herself, as you don't look after any too carefully."

Mrs. Durer was indiscreet enough to show temper and to reply in kind, and before the engagement was ended, Elishy Dow's widow and Jane's grandmother had told her some home-truths about herself which the lady had never dreamed anyone would have been bold enough to hint at. She knew from that authoritative source that she was a cold-blooded, unnatural woman who left her sickly babe to a foreign woman to care for, and that a strange doctor had had to come and look after the child, and that when she herself had come, it was not to see the child, but the doctor. And all this was told with a directness that had the piercing quality of cold steel.

How Mrs. Dow had come by this knowledge Mrs. Durer had no idea. She denied every part of it vehemently and furiously; but she knew, nevertheless, that it was true and that her enemy had the advantage of knowing it was the truth, and further, of knowing how to use that deadly weapon. So what could she do but take it out on the governess and even on the little girl?

Mrs. Dow's comment on the matter was that, "Folks as ride in carriages don't hear the truth

about themselves any too often, but if they come around Elishy Dow's widow puttin' on their airs, they'll get it unslacked."

When next day the little Durer girl, with tearful eyes, turned up dressed for the journey, with "Miss Hazel" clasped to her breast as the pledge of Jane's undying affection, Mrs. Durer, notwithstanding the child's tears, insisted on the doll being immediately sent back, asserting angrily that it was "nothing but a horrid, old, broken doll anyhow," and she would have nothing about her that reminded her of that outrageous creature.

"But, oh! it's Miss Hazel," wept the little girl, "and her spine hasn't gotten straight yet and I wanted to take her to the Doctor."

"Carolyn, don't be so silly. I will not have any more nonsense."

So, the governess was sent back into the house to return Miss Hazel, while Mrs. Durer by turns scolded the child and promised her a fine, new doll.

And this was the end of the little girl's dream.

It was the following winter. One snowy night,

the Doctor was coming down his steps to take his carriage, when he ran into a woman hurrying up the steps. "Oh! Doctor," she panted, "come at once—she is so bad."

"Who is? Whom are you talking about?"

"Your little girl—my poor little angel."

"What is the matter with her? How long has she been sick? Who has been attending her? Where is her mother?" were all asked at once, for the Doctor now recognized Mrs. Durer's governess.

"I don't know, sir, what's the matter. She was taken just after Madame went out to-night. She hasn't been quite well for some time. A doctor came once, but there hasn't been any doctor called in since, because Madame didn't think there was much the matter. You see she hasn't seen much of her lately—she's been so busy going out—but she always runs up every evening before she goes out to ask if she wants anything." (The Doctor grunted.) "But this evening she was going out to dinner and afterwards to the Opera and then she was going on to a ball somewhere. And she got in so late she just had time to dress and didn't have time to come

up to the nursery. And the little girl, who was ailing a bit, was so disappointed she didn't go to sleep very quickly. But presently she went to sleep pretending that she had 'Miss Hazel' in her arms—that's the old doll you mended for 'em last summer—the other little girl gave it to her when Madame took her away and she always loved it best of all, and played that she still had her. Then after she had been asleep a little while she waked and asked for her mamma, and when I went to her she had a burning fever, and was out of her head. And I thought of you at once, because you know her so well. But William—he's the butler, he said as it wasn't etiquette to send for you, and Madame would be home before long."

"Etiquette be ——!" growled the Doctor, and opening his carriage he handed the nurse in and sprang in after her.

"I was sure you'd come," panted the nurse, "so I thought I'd come and see you anyway; so I just put on my bonnet and came right away."

A few minutes later the Doctor was at the child's bedside, bending over her, examining her with a grave face, while a half dozen sympathetic servants,

awestruck at the sudden illness, stood just within or just without the doors.

"Where's Mrs. Durer?" he asked, as he raised up.

"She must be at the ball by this time," said the butler. "She was going to a ball from the opera."

"Send for her at once," he said quietly, and immediately turned all his attention again to the little girl who was muttering in her delirium.

An hour later there was a rush up the stairs, a murmur without, and Mrs. Durer hastily entered the room. She blazed with jewels.

"Oh! my angel! My poor little darling. What is it? Are you ill!"

She paused as she approached the bed, and then stood still, while a look of horror came into her face and remained stamped there, as though she had turned to stone.

"Oh! Doctor! What is it? Is she dying?"

"She is very sick," said the Doctor, without taking his eyes from the child's face. The woman threw herself on her knees beside the bed.

"My darling—don't you know me? Don't you know Mamma?" she asked.

The deep sunken eyes rested on her a second, but there was no recognition. They turned away, and the child went on muttering:

"Where is Jane! Tell Jane when my beautiful Mamma comes she will play with us."

The Doctor's face hardened at the words. He had heard them often during the past summer, and he knew the sad ending of that dream. The woman at the bedside crouched lower.

"Don't you know Mamma, darling?"

"No. Where is Miss Hazel? When she gets well and strong we will all play together."

Mechanically the woman at the bedside began to strip off her jewels and they rolled down on the floor, without anyone heeding them. "I will get her for you," she said humbly.

A fleeting look of recognition dawned in the little face. "Is she well? May I play with her when I get well?"

"Yes—soon."

"And Jane?—My Mamma won't let me play any more."

Mrs. Durer winced.

"Doctor, what is the matter with her?"

"Starved," said the Doctor.

She sprang to her feet and turned on the nurse like a tigress.

"You! You wretch! How dare you!"

"It was not she." The Doctor's voice was low, but vibrant, and his deep eyes burned.

"What?—Who then? I told her to give her the best—to spare nothing."

"She obeyed you, but she could not give her the best."

"What? How could she be starved?"

"It was her heart. It starved."

"You mean—?" Her voice died in her throat as the Doctor suddenly bent low over the child and put his hand on her softly, as after a sigh the tossing ceased and her head sank on the pillow. Mrs. Durer bent forward with horror in her eyes.

"Doctor! What—is—it?"

The Doctor made no reply, He folded the little hands and smoothed the soft hair on the little face which had suddenly grown placid. Then he bent over and kissed the white, calm brow. And when

he raised up, his eyes, as he glanced at Mrs. Durer, had softened.

I learned of the death of the little girl through a letter from the Doctor which showed real grief and some bitterness. I knew therefore that the story which came to me of his attention to Mrs. Durer was as unfounded as ever. And when, some years later, I again visited Rock Ledge, now grown to a watering place of the degree which the press calls "some importance," I was interested to learn something of the lady's later history.

It seems that for years she returned no more to Rock Ledge; but went abroad annually, returning just in time each season to display at one of the most fashionable summer resorts on the Coast the creations of the first dressmakers of the Rue de la Paix, reinforced gradually more and more by the efforts of other artists. All of which was duly chronicled by those sheets which cater to the millinery tastes of the public which are particularly interested in such important matters. Then after a period in which younger rivals came to supplant her in the

eye of that public, she reappeared at Rock Ledge. She was still handsome—some said, handsomer than ever; but my friend who spoke to me of her, said she was the most discontented woman she ever saw. "She wanted nothing that she had and wanted everything else. The fact is," she said, "she always wanted the moon—she wanted to marry that big good-looking doctor who attended her child; and who performed such a wonderful cure in the case of old Mrs. Dow's crippled granddaughter—you know about that?"

I replied that I had heard of it. But she went on to tell me all the details quite as if I had not said it.

"You know she did not have any spine at all."

"No, I did not know that," I interjected.

"—Not a particle of one—oh! not the least bit, and your friend took her and just made one for her, and now——"

"How on earth did he perform that miracle?"

"I don't know—you go and see old Mrs. Dow, in the old cottage down under the big apple-trees, with the lilac bushes by the side door, and the peonies and hollyhocks—and she'll tell you. He actually made

her one—strapped her to a board for years—and put her in a plaster jacket for I don't know how long, and now—what do you think!" She paused for breath and in the interval I said, "I did not know what to think."

"—She is a trained nurse—a strapping, strong woman—a trained nurse!"

This was news, indeed, and my memory of old times and of my first visit to Rock Ledge having been revived by the conversation, I strolled down that afternoon to see Elishy Dow's widow and the old cottage under the big apple-trees.

I found her, like her apple-trees, a good deal aged since I had been one of her early boarders that summer; but with her keen eyes still glinting shrewdly through her spectacles, on which gold rims had replaced the old silver rims—"given her by Jane," as she mentioned with grandmotherly pride.

She still cherished the memory of Elishy Dow, and apparently cherished some other memories as well. She referred again and again to that summer that I had spent beneath her roof, and showed me a photograph of the Doctor, hung in her front room

in a place quite as conspicuous as the memorable portrait of Elishy Dow. It also was the gift of Jane, as she explained.

"Oh! I say, you don't know how much Jane thinks of that man—she don't allow there's anybody in the whole world just exactly like him. Why, she thinks as much of him as if she was his widder. You know she's in his hospital now?"

"Ah! I am sorry to hear that."

"Oh! bless you! not that away—why, Jane's as well and strong and peart now as anybody. I say, you just 'd ought to see her. Why! the Doctor!—Well, you just 'd ought to see her! You'd hardly believe it."

And then the details came out quite as my friend had said they would.

Also there came another part of the story.

One summer, not long before—"just about dusk—well, good dusk," as Mrs. Dow explained, with the precision natural to her, a knock had come on the door—the side door that the neighbors used—and when she had put down the basket she had in her hand with the hood in it which she was "knitting

for Jane," she went to the door—and there was—"Who do you suppose?"

I started to hazard "Jane?" but it was plainly not she, nor could it be Elishy Dow, for according to Captain Spile he was well buried. So I gave it up as someone I could not imagine. Mrs. Dow looked triumphant.

"That woman!" Her face became reflective. "Well, I—!" she began, and then her expression softened. "I don't know as I ever felt so sorry for any woman in my life. I never expected to feel sorry for her; but I did. And do you know I took and showed her this hull house and everything that poor little thing had used. And she cried like her heart would break. And she asked me to take her down to where the Doctor made the play-house for 'em that summer, and asked me if I thought she could buy that place. "I never expected to be sorry for that woman; but I was. She was so lonesome. She said she didn't have a soul in the worl' as cared for her—just cared for the money she had.

"And as I was showin' her the room that little thing had had, and the bureau, and pulled open a

drawer, there was the old doll the Doctor mended for Jane that first summer he came here, when he wanted Jane to let him mend her. Jane had given it to that little girl the day that wom—the day she went away and her mother wouldn't let her keep it, though she cried so—and there it lay just where Jane put it, with the little plaster jacket on it the Doctor 'd made and all, and when that wom—when she saw it she grabbed it up and first thing I knew she fell down flat on the floor with it in her arms kissin' it like 'twas her own child.

"Well, I will say my floor is clean. One thing Elishy Dow al'ays would have was a clean floor.

"And when she got up, she asked me if I would sell her the doll. I told her 'No,' I couldn't sell her —'t she was Jane's. Then she asked if I thought Jane would sell her; 't she'd give anything for her, 'anything in reason.'"

As she paused I ventured to ask her what her reply was.

"I told her, 'No—I didn't think Jane would; but I thought Jane would want me to give it to her.' She was so lonesome."

THE HOSTAGE

OR, ALONG THE POTOMAC

A ONE-ACT PLAY

THE HOSTAGE

OR, ALONG THE POTOMAC

A One-Act Play

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Lieut.-Col. Winthrop Bartlett, U.S.A., *about 25, wounded and convalescing at Kent Manor, an old Colonial Mansion on the north bank of the Potomac.*

Maj. Lindsay Graham, C.S.A. *An old classmate of Colonel B.'s; a prisoner of war in Kent prison under sentence of death as a hostage.*

Lieut. Joseph Crew, *Superintendent of Kent prison.*

Miss Rosamond Bartlett. *Sister of Colonel Bartlett; about 20; slim, piquant and pretty.*

Mammy Caroline. *Major Graham's old colored mammy; who, having come on to nurse her young master and not being allowed to see him, has been engaged temporarily as a servant by Miss Bartlett.*

ZEKE. *Mammy Caroline's son; pompous, self-important and lazy, in service of Colonel Bartlett.*

GUARDS AND COURIERS.

PLACE

Kent Manor, an old Colonial mansion, in a fine park on north bank of Potomac, from which the family have refugeed, occupied temporarily as headquarters by Colonel Bartlett during his convalescence.

TIME

The very close of the Civil War.

SCENE

Open court at rear of Kent Manor, partly paved; with Colonial arcade on either side, and offices right and left. In Court, flowers and shrubs. Two doors and an alcove L. Over an alcove hangs a large U. S. flag as a portière. At back a brick wall, ivy-covered, about six feet high, broken in one place, with shrubbery (evergreens) beyond. A high batten-door R. end. In background: a rolling park with trees in distance, through which runs a road; with a glimpse of Potomac River winding beyond.

Trunks and boxes are standing under arcade, several of them open. There are lounging-chairs under an awning and a bench against the rear wall. Paraphernalia of an officer's headquarters is lying about.

CURTAIN RISES

MAMMY CAROLINE. [*Discovered packing trunk. She sighs and stops.*] Oh! Master! ef dis war wuz jest over! To think of my young master—my chile—shet up in dat prison yonder and dat nigger-trader up dyah won't let a soul see him! He always hated my chile. I wonder ef dat Zeke ain't never comin' back. [*She steps up on bench and peeps over wall. A voice is heard outside singing.*]

"Ole master run, ha-ha!
De darkies stay, ho-ho!
It mus' be now dat de kingdom am comin'
In de year of Jubelo!"

MAMMY. Dat's dat worthless Zeke of mine now! [*She jumps down and turns to door R.*] I'll mek him sing de wrong side of his mouf ef he didn't find out what I send him to find out. [*Enter, at batten-door, Zeke dressed in an old uniform. Addresses Zeke eagerly.*] Did you see him?

ZEKE [*looking around*]. Don't hurry me! Don't jump at me dat way.

MAMMY [*shaking him impatiently*]. I'll jump at

you wuss dan dat ef you don't tell me. Did you see him?

ZEKE [*coolly admiring himself*]. See who?

MAMMY [*slapping him*]. Your young master yonder in dat prison.

ZEKE. I ain't got no young master. I'se free. De 'mancipation proclamation is done set us all free, Colonel Crew say, an' I'se jist as good as he is.

MAMMY [*slapping him in earnest*]. Don't fool wid me, boy! Ef you does I'll show you whether you free or not. You know who I mean. Did you git in to see him?

ZEKE. Yes, I seen him last night—[*becomes serious*] for de *last* time.

MAMMY [*sharply*]. What's dat? Is he sick?

ZEKE [*sadly*]. No. Wuss den dat.

MAMMY. What's wuss than dat?—He ain't dea—?

ZEKE. Not yit, but dey's gwine to shoot him.

MAMMY [*dazed. Falling back*]. Dey's gwine to what?

ZEKE. Shoot him for a *hosstage.*

MAMMY [*dazed*]. Shoot him for what?

ZEKE. For a hosstage—

MAMMY. What's a hossitage?

ZEKE. Hit's somet'n to do wid stealin' hosses. Dey's gwine to shoot him for de hoss of a Yankee Colonel what de Rebs is done steal t'other side of de river—down dyah whar you call yo' home.

MAMMY. What's he got to do wid it?

ZEKE. Nuttin'. But dey's gwine to shoot him all de same. Joe Crew's got he clamps on him and you know when he gits his clamps on any body he's gone. Dey drawed lots for 'em two days ago to see which one was to be shot. [*He takes a letter from the lining of his pocket and holds it up pompously.*] Look at dis paper.

MAMMY. What's dat?

ZEKE. Hit's a letter Colonel Crew, de superintendent, gin me to gi' our overseer, Jake Slow. He's a big man now. He gin me dis uniform to carry it. [*Straightens up and salutes pompously.*] He's gwine to meck me a Cap'n.

MAMMY [*eying letter suspiciously*]. Dat nigger-trader gin it to you? Gwine to meck you a fool—ef you wa'n't dat already. What's in it?

ZEKE [*pompously*]. Ne'm mind. Dat's for me to know and you to find out.

MAMMY [*snatching the letter from him*]. Boy, don't you fool wid me. [*She tears the letter open and gazes at it.*] I wonder what he done put in it?

ZEKE [*trying to take it from her*]. Gin it to me and I'll tell you.

MAMMY. How you gwine tell me? You can't read.

ZEKE. Yes, I can. Le' me show you.

MAMMY [*scornfully*]. Well, le' me heah you. [*She holds one end of the paper while he holds the other and looks at it.*]

ZEKE [*hesitatingly*]. "Dear Jake:" [*To Mammy.*] Dat's his name, you know? Jake Slow? [*Pauses.*]

MAMMY. I know he name, boy. Well, go on.

ZEKE. "I takes my pen in hand to write you dese few lines—" Dat's dat line. [*Pauses and points to letter.*]

MAMMY [*watching closely*]. Well, go on.

ZEKE [*scratching his head*]. "I takes my pen in hand to write—"

MAMMY. You done said dat once. He ain't put his pen down yet.

ZEKE [*pretending to read*]. Don't hurry me. Oh, yes! "I sends dis by a good man, Cap'n Ezekiel Jackson—one o' my bes' frien's—a very fine gent'-man. Pay him well. You can trust him intirely."

MAMMY [*snatching the letter from him*]. Go on 'bout your business, boy. I know he ain't said dat. He knows you too well. I'm gwine to find out what's in dis letter. [*She turns to door L. U. E. as a voice is heard outside singing: "Tramp, tramp, tramp, the boys are marching."*] Miss Rose.

[*Enter Miss Bartlett L. U. E. dressed in morning costume.*] Oh, Miss Rose!

ROSE. Why, Mammy, what is the matter? Why are you so agitated?

MAMMY [*handing her letter*]. Oh, Miss Rose! Dey's gwine to shoot my young master; my chile what I rocked in dese arms. Will you please read dis?

ROSE. Shoot your young master! Impossible! What for? Where is he? [*Opening letter and reading.*] "Dear Jake:"

ZEKE [*from behind*]. See dyah! Dat's what I said. Who say I can't read?

MAMMY [*looking around and scowling at him*]. Shet up, boy! Please go on, Miss Rose.

ROSE [*reading slowly*]. "At last I have my revenge. Your young Major Graham who used to be so scornful of me and you as a nigger-trader and an overseer is just where I want him—in my power under sentence of death as a hostage and will be shot to-morrow. Revenge is sweet. I wish you could be here to see it."

MAMMY [*wringing her hands*]. Oh, Lord! Oh, Lord!

ROSE [*pausing*]. Major Graham! Why that must be my brother's old classmate and friend that he is so much interested in! [*To Mammy.*] What is his name?

MAMMY. Lindsay, ma'am—Lindsay Graham, de son of my ol' master and mistis—what I hilt in dese arms when he wa'n't an hour ole—what I'se rocked to sleep on my breas' so often! My little Marse Lindsay—my chile!

ROSE. Yes, that was his name. My brother said

he was in some grave danger and he has gone to telegraph to Washington about him to try to save him.

MAMMY. Yes, m'—yes, m'—I pray he may help him.

ROSE. Oh! he will—he will, I know. [*Reading.*] "He drew a blank at first, but like a fool gave it to another man who had a family, and then drew in his place the death number." [*To Mammy.*] Oh, think of that! What a noble, unselfish thing!

MAMMY. Oh, Lord! Dat was just like him. What did he do dat for?

ROSE [*reading*]. "I shall to-morrow square all our accounts and we will see how he appears when he looks down the barrels of my firing squad." [*To Mammy.*] The wretch!

MAMMY [*fiercely*]. The nigger-trader! He always hated my chile becus he abused him once for sellin' niggers down Souf. Oh, my po' young master!

ZEKE. He's gone! Didn't I tell you so?

ROSE [*reading*]. "I have one more enemy here to deal with: a Colonel on our side. Carries his head too high, but I'm working, and hope he'll lose it before long.

ROSE. Who can that be? [*Reading*]. "He has a sister I want, and mean to get."

MAMMY. Dat's you.

ROSE [*reading*]. "I have told the bearer that you would reward him."

ZEKE. See dyah! What did I tell you?

ROSE [*reading*]. "Return him to his master as a runaway nigger and get a reward for him."

ZEKE. What's dat!

MAMMY. Lord! I knowed it. An' dat fool boy meckin' out he ken read! [*To Zeke.*] I tolt you so. I hope now you satisfied, Cap'n Ezekiel Jackson! Go, boy, and find de Cun'l, maybe he can save him. Hurry for your life, you heah! Hurry! [*She drives Zeke out R.U.E.*] Oh, ef de Cun'l was just here he'd try to save him, 'cause he's a good man ef he *is* a *Yankee.*

ROSE. "If he *is* a *Yankee,*" indeed! Well, let me tell you that he has gone to telegraph to Washington to try to save Major Graham, if he *is* a *Rebel.*

MAMMY [*excitedly*]. Oh! Thank de Lord for dat! When will he be back? [*She climbs up on bench and looks over wall.*]

ROSE [*mounting bench and looking over wall*]. He ought to be back now. He was in a great hurry. Perhaps, he got the reprieve and took it straight to the prison. [*They both look.*]

MAMMY. Pray de good Lord he did. Ain't dat him? Nor dat's a bush. You jist well git down, Miss Rose—"A watched pot never biles." [*Continues to gaze eagerly.*]

ROSE [*shading her eyes*]. There is a man coming; but—he is not my brother.

MAMMY [*peering*]. Where? Where? Oh! Dat's de man up yonder at the prison. I know dat man. I's seen him many a time, drivin' a drove o' black folks like dey was cattle—whole wagon-loads of 'em—to sell 'em down Souf. He used to be a nigger-trader down home befo' de war and runned away when de war come an' jined de Yankees. [*A voice outside R. U. E. calling Zeke! Zeke!*]

ROSE [*eagerly*]. There is my brother now! [*She jumps down.*] He must have come the other way. I will see if he got the reprieve. He must have it.

MAMMY. Oh! Thank de Lord! [*They turn to*

R. U. E. Enter Colonel Bartlett R. U. E. Rose runs forward to meet him, followed by Mammy.]

ROSE. Brother, were you successful?

COLONEL BARTLETT [*wearily shaking his head*]. No. Failed. [*Sinks into chair.*]

ROSE [*horrified*]. What! Your telegram has not been answered?

COLONEL BARTLETT [*despondently; taking off his sword*]. Yes. But—adversely. The influence was too strong. There is no hope.

MAMMY. Oh, Lord! My young master! My chile! My chile! I got to go pray now. I ain' got no hope but in Gord! [*She throws apron over her head and rocks from side to side. Exit Mammy slowly, L. U. E.*]

ROSE. It is terrible! To think of them shooting an innocent man. It is monstrous!

COLONEL BARTLETT [*gravely*]. It is one of the laws of war. One of our men was shot, or is reported to have been. He is a hostage and suffers for another.

ROSE. Did you know that he had drawn a blank and given it to a brother officer who had a family?

COLONEL BARTLETT. Oh, yes! I told them that. I even put in my telegram that he had once saved my life. Of course, I could not tell how when I had shot at him he fired in the air, but I stated the fact and I asked his life as a personal favor.

ROSE. And the reply was adverse? What did it say?

COLONEL BARTLETT [*taking out a dispatch.*] "Impossible." [*Hands dispatch to her.*] That fellow Crew has blocked me. He is an incredible ruffian, skulking around a prison instead of being in the army!

ROSE [*reading*]. "Impossible. Superintendent of prison reports your story untrue. Major Graham was properly selected for execution." Signed, "Secretary of War." [*In horror.*] That creature Crew! To take his word! He is a murderer!

COLONEL BARTLETT [*soothingly*]. Oh! The laws of war—

ROSE. Were made for justice, not cruelty, and should not be made the excuse for murder.

COLONEL BARTLETT [*speaking moodily*]. To think of old Lindsay Graham, the life of our class, being

shot to death against a prison-wall by a turncoat dog like that Crew! Heigh-ho! It's bitter!

ROSE. Why did you not try the President? He has a great, kind heart, "with malice toward none and charity for all."

COLONEL BARTLETT [*wearily*]. I could go no further than the Secretary of War. He is my superior.

ROSE. But the President is the superior of every one. Does the poor man know that your efforts have been in vain?

COLONEL BARTLETT. No. I tried to get a permit to see him, but in vain. That fellow, Crew, was in a rage over an escape that took place last night and had left word to let no one see him.

ROSE. An escape of prisoners! Oh! Brother, I am afraid. They must be desperate men. I am afraid they might come here.

COLONEL BARTLETT. Oh! They will not come where an officer has his headquarters.

ROSE. Oh! If that poor fellow had only gotten away!

COLONEL BARTLETT [*shaking his head*]. It would

have done him no good. They are certain to be recaptured. Crew is scouring the country, and they cannot get across the river. Every boat is locked. Well, I must go and give orders to have a sharp lookout kept. And then I must complete my arrangements to leave this afternoon to join my regiment. [*Rises and tries to walk. Staggers and catches at table.*] Oh!

ROSE [*springing to his side and supporting him solicitously.*] Oh! Brother, how pale you are! You are still far too ill to go back to the front. [*Helps him to a chair.*]

COLONEL BARTLETT [*recovering*]. No! I am all right. I must go! The war is almost over. Richmond has fallen. Lee has abandoned Petersburg and, with his veterans worn to a mere remnant, is trying to reach Johnston; and when the last battle is fought I must be with my men. [*He takes up his sword and tries to put it on.*]

ROSE [*helping him buckle on sword*]. Oh! I feel as though I had just gotten you back from the dead. You have been father, mother, everything to me. And to have you, after all the fatigue and danger,

go again seems so dreadful. Suppose after all you have escaped you should fall at the last in the very moment of victory. Oh! I could not bear it! [*Brushes away a tear.*]

COLONEL BARTLETT [*fondly patting her*]. To die in the moment of victory is a soldier's glory. Why, is this the little girl who four years ago helped me buckle on my sword and bade me go and help save the Union? Don't you know that the only danger for a soldier is being left behind?

ROSE [*wipes her eyes*]. Yes—yes, I know—of course, you must go. But oh! If they were only conquered and the war were over!

COLONEL BARTLETT. What we want is not conquest, but peace and the Union.

ROSE [*warmly*]. No. I want peace, but I want them conquered too; *conquered!*

COLONEL BARTLETT [*laughing and patting her*]. We are not fighting for conquest. As soon as they lay down their arms they will be our brothers again.

ROSE [*vehemently*]. Not mine! Never mine! I wish their fate were in my hands. Oh! What wouldn't I give!

COLONEL BARTLETT [*laughing*]. My! What a fire-eater! You are almost as bad as "Colonel" Crew, who wants to hang them all.

ROSE [*smiling*]. Not as bad as that.

COLONEL BARTLETT [*walks over and reaches up to take down the flag*]. But this flag is broad enough to protect them. Even against their will it will protect them. Here, you will have to take this down. I cannot. [*Supports himself against wall or table.*]

ROSE [*moving over and mounting chair to take down flag*]. "If any man pulls down the flag shoot him on the spot!" [*Enter Zeke R. U. E. announcing a visitor.*]

ZEKE. Mister Crew. [*Enter Crew in gaudy uniform.*]

CREW [*to Zeke pompously*]. *Colonel* Crew, Sir. [*Salutes Colonel Bartlett.*] Good morning, Colonel Bartlett. A fine day to get rid of rebels, eh? [*Bowing low to Rose.*] Good morning, Miss Rose. You are looking unusually—ah—I hope you are very well. [*Colonel Bartlett returns salute stiffly. Rose bows coldly. Passes over to her brother. Speaks to him in undertone.*]

ROSE. I don't wonder the prisoners try to escape from him. I shall escape. [*Starts to retire L. U. E.*]

CREW [*eagerly*]. Don't go away, I beg you, Miss Rose. You will be interested in what I have to say.

ROSE [*coldly*]. I hardly think so. [*Walks over to trunk and busies herself with packing while listening.*]

CREW [*addresses Colonel Bartlett*]. You have heard of the escape last night? I understand you have been up to my place?

COLONEL BARTLETT. Yes. I heard, and I rode up to what you call *your* place to see the prisoner in whose fate I informed you I was interested: Major Graham.

CREW [*somewhat anxiously*]. Did you see him? What did you learn there?

COLONEL BARTLETT. I learned that I could not see him because—[*Pauses*].

CREW [*very anxiously*]. Because—?

COLONEL BARTLETT [*coldly*]. You had left orders that no one was to have access to him.

CREW [*recovering himself*]. Yes, yes. A prisoner under sentence of death—a just sentence, too. Those

are the orders from headquarters. You are very much interested in him?

COLONEL BARTLETT. Yes, I am interested in every gallant young man whose unfortunate fate it is to come under the unhappy law of reprisals, and particularly in one who was my classmate and to whom I once owed my life.

ROSE [*sighing*]. Only a brute would not be interested. [*She glances toward the park*]. What was that? I thought I heard some one.

CREW [*looking at Rose significantly*]. You were unsuccessful in your efforts to secure his pardon?

COLONEL BARTLETT. How do you know that?

CREW [*pompously*]. I know many things, Colonel Bartlett—and I have come to demand your aid in apprehending the prisoner who escaped last night.

COLONEL BARTLETT [*coldly*]. Demand? It is my duty to do whatever an officer and a gentleman should properly do, and I shall do it irrespective of any demand by you.

CREW. Ah! And in particular to demand—I mean—ah—to request that a close watch be kept about this house here.

COLONEL BARTLETT. That shall be done, too, but it is not likely that escaped prisoners will come where a Union Officer has his headquarters.

CREW. Humph! I don't know. I do not believe in allowing such a hotbed of treason as this place to remain as it is. It ought to be burnt to the ground.

COLONEL BARTLETT [*turning on him*]. Lieutenant Crew, the orders are that this place is not to be interfered with in any way beyond what is requisite for the proper use and benefit of our troops, and I mean to see that these orders are carried out.

CREW [*aside*]. You are damned squeamish about the property of rebels! [*To Colonel Bartlett.*] There is no use in becoming excited. I suppose you are not aware that at least two of the servants in your employ are spies for the rebels and have been trying to get into communication with prisoners under my very nose?

COLONEL BARTLETT. I am aware that an old negro woman who is employed here, temporarily, was the nurse of Major Graham, and came here hoping to see him—which you prevented; but what-

ever she may have wanted she has had no opportunity to injure any one.

CREW. No opportunity! Suppose I should state to you that she and her son—I mean she had aided —I mean had aided prisoners to escape?

COLONEL BARTLETT [*coldly*]. I should question that statement.

CREW. And that—ah—the prisoner who escaped has been traced to this house—in this direction?

COLONEL BARTLETT. If you said to this house, I should say that it was false; if in this direction, I should say that he would be caught.

ROSE [*coming forward and looking at her brother anxiously*]. Coming in this direction? The escaped prisoner!

COLONEL BARTLETT. Naturally he would make for the river and try to get across to the other side. But if he comes this way he will be recaptured. My people are on the lookout for him.

CREW. Oh! He cannot escape unless someone helps him, for he is wounded. I have offered a reward for him dead or alive. We shall have him before dark.

ROSE [*solicitously*]. Oh! Is he badly wounded?

CREW. Not as badly as I would like or as he will be if I can get a chance at him. [*Handles his pistol.*]

ROSE. Oh! I hope they will capture him alive.

CREW. You need waste no sympathy on him. I am not sure I would not rather have him dead. He is a desperate fellow.

ROSE [*clasping her hands and looking at her brother*]. Oh! Is he desperate?

COLONEL BARTLETT. Poor devils! desperate enough, I fancy! [*Showing Crew the door.*] Lieutenant Crew, I will join you outside.

CREW. Lieutenant *Colonel* Crew, if you please.

COLONEL BARTLETT. Well, Lieutenant *Colonel* Crew, be so good as to wait for me outside. [*Exit Crew R. U. E., reluctantly; looking over his shoulder at Rose. Colonel Bartlett takes up pistol and turns to door.*] What a blackguard that fellow is! I could stand being shot, but not being his prisoner. He adds another terror to war. Rose, I will never be taken prisoner.

ROSE. Would it not be terrible? Do you think he will catch the prisoner?

COLONEL BARTLETT [*thoughtfully*]. Oh, yes. There is no fear of his not catching him. He must have a nose like a hound. He has had too much experience chasing runaway slaves. [*Lays pistol down on table and turns to door.*]

ROSE. Oh! please take your pistol. Suppose he should shoot you! He must be a desperate man. Wait for me. [*She takes up pistol timidly.*]

COLONEL BARTLETT [*smiling*]. What are you going to do with that? Protect me?

ROSE. Yes. I am going with you. You are wounded, and if he should meet you he might— [*handles pistol*] shoot you.

COLONEL BARTLETT [*dodging*]. Look out! I am more afraid of you than of him. A woman is a dangerous creature anyhow, but with a pistol——!

ROSE. Pshaw! Men are such cowards. [*She lays pistol down on table, with relief.*] Wait for me. I am afraid for you.

COLONEL BARTLETT [*laughing*]. You stay here and catch him if he comes here. I will be back after a little. [*Exit Colonel Bartlett R. U. E.*]

ROSE [*talking to herself with her eye on the door*].

I trust they will catch him. He might be the very one to shoot my brother. Oh! I know it's unchristian, but I wish he had not escaped. [*She turns to pack trunk. Suddenly over the rear wall where top of bushes show, springs a young man much disheveled and with arm in a sling, loses his balance and falls, rises quickly, catches sight of the pistol on the table, seizes it, turns, and faces Rose, who is much startled.*] Oh! [*Advancing upon Young Man.*] Who are you? What are you? What do you want here?

YOUNG MAN. Who are you? Who is here? They are after me out there!

ROSE [*imperiously*]. Who? Tell me who you are. What do you want? What are you doing here?

YOUNG MAN [*rapidly*]. I am a Confederate Officer who escaped from prison last night, trying to make my way across the river to get back into our lines. And they are hot on my tracks.

ROSE [*starting back*]. Oh! You are the—! An escaped prisoner!

YOUNG MAN. Yes. I heard we had friends here who would help us. Who lives here?

ROSE. Colonel Bartlett has his headquarters here.

YOUNG MAN [*starting*]. What Colonel Bartlett? [*Catches sight of flag over alcove.*] You mean a Yankee Colonel? Where is he? [*Inspects pistol.*]

ROSE [*advancing*]. Give me that pistol.

YOUNG MAN [*smiling*]. No. I have no other arms. I will not hurt you. You need not be afraid. No matter who is here, you must conceal me.

ROSE. Give me the pistol. The place is surrounded by guards.

YOUNG MAN. I know it. They are all about here. I have lain in the bushes outside that wall since daybreak watching them. If you can conceal me until dusk I can get across the river.

ROSE [*reflecting*]. No, you cannot. How can you escape? Do you not know that the river is watched and that every boat is ticketed and locked?

YOUNG MAN. I will get there somehow; but I cannot get to the river unless you help me. If my arm were not so bad I could swim it. But I got it broke last night in escaping and it is so helpless.

ROSE [*advancing*]. Does it pain you very much? How can I help you? What do you want?

YOUNG MAN. Well, first, I want some soap and water and a decent suit of clothes.

[*Crew heard outside R. U. E. calling.*] You men keep a close watch all around the grounds. He can't be far off. If you see him shoot him down.

ROSE [*exclaiming*]. Oh! They are coming back. [*She locks door R. U. E., seizes and wraps in a bundle a clean shirt, a uniform coat and a pair of uniform trousers. Young Man listens and cocks pistol. Rose turns to him.*] Promise me you will not use that pistol.

YOUNG MAN. Not unless it is necessary. But I will not go back to that prison. I will not be taken alive. I would rather be shot down than go back to that prison to die like a dog.

ROSE. Why should you die in prison?

YOUNG MAN. I was to have been shot to-day as a hostage.

ROSE [*astonished and agitated*]. Oh! You are Major Graham! I understand now. If you will promise not to use that pistol I will conceal you.

MAJOR GRAHAM. I promise. [*Lays pistol on table near her.*] There! A woman's wit is better than a pistol. But both should be handy. So, I shall count on your presence. Where shall I go?

ROSE [*steps past and lifts flag*]. Here! Take these! Under this!

MAJOR GRAHAM. That uniform! Under that flag! Never! [*Lays down coat. Folds arms and looks at her. Knocking heard at door R. U. E.*]

ROSE [*vehemently*]. Take these, I say. Get under that instantly. Even against your will, it will protect you. [*She seizes him and pushes him under flag forcibly, then turns back toward R. U. E.*] Who is there? [*She unlocks door. Enter Crew R. U. E.*]

CREW. Ah! Miss Rose, you still here? and alone! Fortune is kind to me. I have been seeking this opportunity.

ROSE. I am still here—as you see. [*She appears very busy packing.*] Have you caught the prisoner?

CREW. We have not got the scoundrel yet, but

I will have him in ten minutes. He cannot escape me now. We know his hiding-place.

ROSE [*starting and glancing at flag*]. You know his hiding-place? Ah! Where is it?

CREW. In this house.

ROSE. What? In this house? Who says so? [*Looks behind her.*]

CREW [*advancing*]. He was seen to spring over the wall here.

ROSE [*laughing in a forced way*]. Nonsense! I have been here ever since you left. He could not have done it without my seeing him. [*She moves up between Crew and flag.*]

CREW. Ah! well. He cannot escape. He is run to earth. And meantime I have another important matter. [*Turns back to door and calls to men outside.*] Guards, stand outside as I told you. Watch down the road. Beat the shrubbery, and shoot him on sight. [*Closes door and, turning, crosses over towards Rose.*] Miss Rose, you are going away to-night?

ROSE. Yes. [*Busies herself packing.*] Immediately. As soon as my brother returns. Like a

brave man he wishes to be at the front, and not spend his life skulking at the rear.

CREW. I once wrote a letter telling you how much I admired you. You did not receive it.

ROSE [*coldly*]. Yes. I received it and—returned it.

CREW. It was an insult to me.

ROSE. I had no desire to insult you; but I have still less to associate with you.

CREW. Because I am unknown, you and your brother think I am not your equal, but I will be rich and powerful some day, and then——

ROSE [*coldly*]. Whether you are known or unknown does not concern me. I returned your letter because I did not wish to hold any communication with you. Did you see my brother outside? [*Starts toward R. U. E., then hastily turns back to former position before alcove.*]

CREW. He has gone off—to send another message to save a rebel who deserves to be hanged and who would shoot him on sight. But it is you I want to talk of. [*Advances to her.*] You are in love with some one else?

ROSE [*haughtily*]. Whether I am or not is no concern of yours, Lieutenant Crew. I will bid you

good afternoon. [*Turns toward L. U. E. Glances at flag, which is moving, and turns back again, facing Crew.* Oh! [*Addressing Crew.*] You say the prisoner was seen to come into this house?

CREW. Yes, but as you have been here all the time it must have been some other part of the wall—the garden-wall, perhaps?

ROSE [*hastily*]. Yes. There is a garden-wall—there is an unused wing with some empty rooms in it. You might search that. Let me show you the way. Come this way. [*She leads him out R. E. 2. Enter Major Graham from under flag as door closes. His beard is trimmed and he is dressed in clean linen and wears a pair of uniform trousers.*]

MAJOR GRAHAM. That scoundrel! To dare even to speak to that angel, much less pay his addresses to her! If ever I get hold of him I'll—[*A step is heard outside R. E. 2. Major Graham springs to table and picks up pistol. Turns to flag. Hesitates to lift it. Addresses flag.*] Well, I never expected to be under your protection again, but— [*Knob of door R. E. 2 turns*]—here goes. [*Steps behind flag. Enter Rose R. E. 2. Crosses over rapidly.*]

ROSE [*calling in undertone*]. Quick! Major Graham, you must go. Major Graham!

MAJOR GRAHAM [*lifts flag and steps out*]. Did you call?

ROSE. Yes. Quick! [*Shows surprise at his changed appearance. Aside.*] How improved he is! [*To Major Graham.*] You must get away from here instantly. He will be back directly.

MAJOR GRAHAM [*coolly*]. Where is he?

ROSE. I left him searching the vacant wing. [*Points over her shoulder.*] I think I heard the lock spring as I came out, but he will be released as soon as he can make any one hear him, and you must go.

MAJOR GRAHAM. At least, let me thank you for my life and tell me to whom I owe it.

[*Knocking heard in distance and Crew's voice calling.*] Open this door. Open it, I say.

ROSE [*listening*]. There he is now.

MAJOR GRAHAM. Let him stay there. Who is the officer whom he asked you about?

ROSE. He is my— Never mind who he is. You must go.

MAJOR GRAHAM. Is he the handsome fellow I

have seen at a distance? Tall, with good shoulders and his arm in a sling?

ROSE. Yes. Now you must go. It will not do for him to see you. He will be back here immediately.

MAJOR GRAHAM. I hope I shall not meet him. Do you like him? *He* said you did.

ROSE. Yes. I love him better than— [*She seizes pistol in Major Graham's hand and takes it from him.*] You promised me not to use this. [*Picks up uniform coat.*] Here is a coat. It has a Major's straps on it. It will just fit you.

MAJOR GRAHAM [*holds coat at arm's length and looks at it smiling*]. Do you call that a decent suit?

ROSE [*firing up*]. Yes I do. Put it on at once.

MAJOR GRAHAM. I am afraid if I saw myself in it I might shoot myself. [*Sounds of door breaking outside.*]

ROSE. Quick! I hear him coming. [*She helps him into coat.*] Go in there and lock the door as you go in. I will entertain him.

MAJOR GRAHAM [*smiling*]. Let me lock him in and you entertain me.

ROSE. Go on! Hurry! Here! [*Takes key from pocket and hands it to him.*] This is the key to the lock of our boat. You must slip out of the door beyond the dressing-room. Go down the box walk. Let yourself through the gate at the corner of the garden, and from there to where the boat lies chained to the root of a great sycamore tree is only twenty steps. You can lie concealed among the willows till night and then cross the river.

MAJOR GRAHAM. I owe you my life, but before I go I beg you——

ROSE. Go. I beseech you. They are coming.

MAJOR GRAHAM. I will go, but not until you tell me your name. To whom do I owe my life?

ROSE. Why do you wish to know?

MAJOR GRAHAM. That I may remember it in my orisons.

ROSE. My name is Rosamond. But you will forget it.

MAJOR GRAHAM. The Rose of the World. Forget it! I will never forget it or you as long as I live. You are an angel, and some day, if I live, I will find you and prove it to you. [*He kisses her hand.*]

ROSE [*turning away and then turning back.*] Where are you going?

MAJOR GRAHAM. Back home. To the South. I have you to thank that instead of being shot like a dog I shall have a chance to strike one more blow for the South. If I die then I shall die happy.

ROSE [*in alarm*]. Oh! You are going back to fight?

MAJOR GRAHAM. Yes. There must be one more fight. And once more I shall ride at the head of my men. I have this to thank you for.

ROSE [*drawing back*]. Oh! Just what my brother said. Suppose you should meet him! Promise me if you meet him you will not shoot him.

MAJOR GRAHAM. Of course I promise that.

[*Colonel Bartlett's voice heard without, calling.*] Zeke, come and take my horse.

ROSE. Go. I must stop him. Good-bye.

MAJOR GRAHAM. No. Not good-bye. Some day again, when the flag of freedom flies, I will see you.

ROSE [*lifting the flag and drawing it partially about her.*] Go. This is my flag of freedom. I am what you call a Yankee. I am a Northerner.

MAJOR GRAHAM [*stooping and lifting her hand to his lips*]. What! You are an angel, and angels have no latitude. Good-bye. [*He kisses her hand. Exit under flag. Enter R. U. E. Colonel Bartlett.*]

COLONEL BARTLETT. Well, little Sis, how are you getting on packing? We must be off in an hour, or I shall miss the boat.

ROSE [*stammering*]. Did you catch him?

COLONEL BARTLETT [*taking off his sword*]. The President? Don't know yet. I sent a message as you suggested.

ROSE. No. I mean the escaped prisoner.

COLONEL BARTLETT [*laying his sword down on chair*]. No. Did you?

ROSE. Yes. I mean—I don't know. I mean—No.

COLONEL BARTLETT [*turning as if to enter alcove*]. What are you talking about?

ROSE [*steps in front of him and laughs nervously*]. Nothing. I don't know what I was saying. Where are you going?

COLONEL BARTLETT. Into my dressing room if you will let me by. I must see about my old uniform.

With the Major's straps taken off it will be the very thing to wear in the field. [*He tries to put her aside.*]

Rose [*catching him by coat*]. No, you must not go in there. You look so tired. You must sit right down here and rest. [*She draws him over and makes him sit in chair on top of sword and other articles.*] There, now be comfortable.

Colonel Bartlett. I am not comfortable. [*He rises impatiently and faces her.*] Rose, what is going on here? There is something mysterious I cannot make out.

Rose. Nothing. There is nothing mysterious. Men are so suspicious.

Colonel Bartlett. Why cannot I go into my own dressing-room?

Rose. Because I have a surprise for you.

Colonel Bartlett. What? What has happened? You look quite pale.

Rose. Nothing. Oh! Such a surprise! [*She pinches her cheeks.*] Pale! Nothing of the kind. I am just as rosy. Besides, I was afraid——

Colonel Bartlett. I know. Afraid I would get hurt.

ROSE [*nodding*]. M-hm-hm. And that poor, poor fellow in that prison yonder. Isn't it dreadful!

COLONEL BARTLETT. Well, you need have no apprehension. Let's take down the flag now. We must be off at once. I am expecting a dispatch every minute.

ROSE. Oh! No! Leave it until the last thing. [*She strikes an attitude and laughs a forced laugh.*] "If any man touches the flag shoot him on the spot." Brother, cannot you get rid of that creature, Crew? I cannot bear him in my sight.

COLONEL BARTLETT. He is not in your sight now.

ROSE. But I mean in the house. The very thought of him makes my flesh creep. [*She looks toward dressing-room door and shudders.*]

COLONEL BARTLETT. Is he in there? It would be just like his cursed impudence. Searching my house! [*He steps towards door. Rose catches him quickly.*]

ROSE. Oh! No! He is in the other end of the house.

COLONEL BARTLETT [*turning*]. Well, I will get rid of him in short order. I will order him out. As

if a rebel could be harbored in this house under the very flag! It is ridiculous!

ROSE [*stammering*]. Yes, think of it! Under the very flag! Ha! Ha! Ha! [*Exit Colonel Bartlett hastily R. E. 2. Enter Major Graham smiling.*]

MAJOR GRAHAM. Well done. I did not think you were such an actress.

ROSE [*agitated*]. Oh! I cannot do it! Oh! I ought not to have deceived him! He trusts me. How wicked in me. I must undeceive him. [*She starts to go after Colonel Bartlett. Stops and faces Major Graham.*]

MAJOR GRAHAM [*seating himself and half smiling*]. All right, I am your prisoner.

ROSE. Oh! I don't know what to do. Why did you come here?

MAJOR GRAHAM. Because God had put an angel here to help me.

ROSE. Do you not know that as a Yankee I hate you?

MAJOR GRAHAM. But as my captor you must pity me.

ROSE [*listening L. E.*]. Some one is coming. Go.

[*She lifts flag and glances in; drops flag over door.*] Oh! It is Crew. You are too late. Here. [*She hastily takes off her apron and wraps it around him. Takes up uniform coat and throws it over his arm.*]

[*Enter Crew L. E.*].

CREW. Damn him! Where is he? [*To Rose.*] You have made a fool of me.

ROSE. Oh, no, *I* have not. [*To Major Graham in tone of authority.*] Go take this coat and do as I told you.

MAJOR GRAHAM. Yes, Madam. [*Glances at pistol and hesitates.*] Shall I take this?

ROSE [*hesitatingly*]. Ye-s—. I wonder if my brother—? No, leave it there.

MAJOR GRAHAM [*bowing*]. Yes, Madam. [*Exit L. U. E.*]

CREW [*to Rose*]. Who is that? Where have I seen that man before? I know that voice.

ROSE [*warmly*]. On my word, Sir! I think your inquisition has gone far enough. Where is my brother?

CREW [*sarcastically*]. He has gone to get another dispatch, I suppose. Trying to save the enemy of his

Country. I wish to finish what I have to say to you.

ROSE [*haughtily*]. Well, Sir. What is it?

CREW. You refuse me because of some one else?

ROSE. I do not. I refuse you because of yourself, and I refuse to discuss anything further with you. Now go. [*Points to R. U. E.*]

CREW [*insolently*]. I will not go. Your brother is ordered off and I am in command here now, as I propose to show you and him, and if I catch that scoundrel he shall hang this evening.

ROSE. You'd better try to catch him. Listen! [*Points outside L. U. E. Sound of shots and shouts heard.*]

CREW [*backing away alarmed*]. My God! What's that?

ROSE. Gracious Heavens! [*She runs to door. Opens it and cries out.*] Do not shoot him. He is unarmed. [*Exit L. U. E.*]

CREW [*following her and looking in at door cautiously*]. Shoot him! Damn you! Shoot him, I say. [*Jerks out pistol.*] Let *me* shoot him.

ROSE [*springing out at door, catching his pistol and*

struggling with him]. You shall not shoot him. Don't you see he is unarmed and already wounded.

CREW [*unable to get pistol free. Shouting*]. Handcuff him. Tie him. Tie him tight. That's right. [*To Rose.*] It makes no difference. He will be shot this afternoon, or better still, hanged for being in that uniform.

ROSE. Oh! Hanged? That uniform! What have I done!

CREW [*triumphantly*]. Yes, hanged! Ha! ha! You thought you had outwitted me. See what has come of it. Ah! This is fine! To catch him in our uniform and hang him as a spy! That is a good one!

ROSE [*half dazed*]. Hanged! Oh! Impossible. You could not be so wicked. You know that he is not a spy, that he has just put it on to escape in.

CREW. Do I? I know the laws of war—I know the sweetness of revenge.

ROSE. Then revenge yourself on me. I gave it to him because—because——

CREW. I know. I know well the reason you gave it. I will revenge myself on you in good time—and

on your brother, too. Oh! this is better than I ever hoped for. I will make you cringe.

ROSE. I beg of you——

CREW. Ah! that is sweet! You beg— You— beg of me!

ROSE. Yes—I beg—it was my fault. My brother is wholly innocent. He did not know he was here. What do you say?

CREW. Wait and see. You think he is better than me. Well, wait and see him on the gallows and your brother arrested for helping a rebel prisoner to escape.

ROSE. Yes, even on the gallows he would be your superior—as superior as righteousness is to wickedness; courage to cowardice; nobility to meanness. And as to my brother I fear nothing. He is above your power to injure.

CREW [*furiously*]. Oh! He shall hang as high as Haman and at once. [*Enter L. U. E. Major Graham, bound with rope and brought in by two guards; a bandage on his head and his arm tied up. To Major Graham.*] Ah, my young man, I have you.

MAJOR GRAHAM [*bows silently to Rose and then*

turns to Crew]. Yes. It is not much to catch an unarmed man and a wounded one at that. If I had had a pistol—[*Staggers and leans against table.*]

ROSE. Oh! What have I done! [*She brings him a chair.*] Sit down and rest. [*In an undertone.*] Forgive me.

MAJOR GRAHAM. There is nothing to forgive. It was not your fault. You did all in your power. It was my misfortune.

CREW [*sneeringly*]. You were cleverly trapped. You thought you were safe under the protection of this patriotic young lady, but I knew where you were all along. She gave you up.

ROSE. Oh! What a falsehood! [*To Major Graham.*] You do not believe that?

MAJOR GRAHAM. Not a word of it. I know him of old. A liar and a coward.

CREW. You will know me better in an hour or two when you are mounting the gallows.

ROSE [*shuddering*]. Oh! [*To Crew, fiercely.*] You shall not insult him.

MAJOR GRAHAM [*quietly*]. He cannot insult me.

CREW. But I can hang you.

MAJOR GRAHAM. And I can hang and still defy you. Do you think that when death is what every soldier faces every day as an incident of his duty that I should fear it? [*To Rose.*] Do not disturb yourself. It is the fate of war.

ROSE [*to Crew*]. If my brother were here you would not dare do this.

CREW [*scornfully*]. Your brother is not here and I am in command now and I order you to leave instantly or I will arrest you. [*To guard.*] Take this young woman to her room and if she attempts to return arrest her. Lock her up.

MAJOR GRAHAM [*rising*]. You hound!

ROSE [*to Guard*]. Do not touch me. I will go. [*To Major Graham.*] My brother will soon return. Do not despair.

CREW. Your brother and you will have enough to do answering charges of treason for harboring rebels—the enemies of your country.

ROSE. We the enemies of our country! It is you and your like who are the enemies of our country and its disgrace.

MAJOR GRAHAM [*to Rose*]. Bravo! Well said! I

will never despair while I have your compassion. [*Exit Rose under guard L. U. E. To Crew.*] You blackguard! If I were only free for one moment!

CREW. Ha, ha, ha! The wheel has turned and the negro-trader whom you used to despise is——

MAJOR GRAHAM. A negro-trader and a blackguard still, just as you always were, whom I still despise; a disgrace to the uniform which thousands of gallant gentlemen have worn with honor.

CREW [*jerks out pistol furiously*]. Damn you! I will kill you.

MAJOR GRAHAM [*facing him calmly*]. I dare you! Shoot.

CREW [*pausing and putting up pistol*]. No; that would please you too much. I will wait and hang you. [*Enter L. U. E. Mammy Caroline dressed in shawl and bonnet. She sees Major Graham, rushes over and embraces him, crying.*]

MAMMY. Oh! my Chile! my Chile! What is dey doin' to you while I been 'way!

MAJOR GRAHAM. Why, Mammy! Dear old Mammy! I'm all right.

CREW [*catching hold of Mammy Caroline*]. Get away from him.

MAMMY [*wheeling on him*]. *Don't you tetch me!* Don't you lay yo' hand 'pon me. If you does I'll tyah you limb from limb. [*She brandishes a large pair of scissors.*]

CREW [*backing away*]. You black harridan! I'll have you shot. [*Loud knocking outside R. U. E.*] Who is that? [*Enter Guard hastily. To Guard.*] Arrest this woman. Lock her up.

MAMMY. Yes, you can 'rest me, but don't you tetch me or I'll meck you think every nigger you ever sold is on yo' back.

GUARD [*handing Crew a dispatch*]. A courier just brought this for Colonel Bartlett. Says it is urgent.

CREW. Colonel Bartlett is away. I will take it. [*Opens it.*] Hell! [*Glances at Guard and changes tone.*] Oh! That's all right! Where is the messenger? Tell him to wait.

GUARD. All right! But I think he has gone. [*To Mammy.*] Come on, old woman.

MAMMY. All right. I'm gwine. [*To Crew.*] You wait till de Cun'l comes. He'll settle you. [*She*

lays scissors on table. Exit Guard with Mammy R. U. E.]

CREW [*calling*]. Guard! Guard! Hell! I must see him. I will have him shot instantly. [*Stuffs dispatch in pocket and looks at Major Graham.*] You are safe enough, I guess, till I get my squad. Guard! [*Exit Crew hastily R. U. E.*]

MAJOR GRAHAM [*soliloquizing*]. Well, it is all over. If it had only been in battle at the head of my men! It is hard to go this way, but after it is all over it is quite the same, I suppose. This rope cuts cruelly. [*Enter Rose softly L. U. E. Gazes around and passes over to Major Graham.*]

ROSE. Can you forgive me? If I had dreamed of this! I thought you might meet my brother and I feared you might shoot him.

MAJOR GRAHAM [*startled*]. Oh, it is you! There is nothing to forgive. You did all you could and I shall thank you all my life—all the little span left to me. [*He groans.*]

ROSE. Oh! do not say that. I must save you. You are in pain.

MAJOR GRAHAM. It is nothing—only the rope cuts into my wounded arm.

ROSE. I can cut it. Wait! Where is a knife? Oh! these will do. [*She gets the scissors, locks door and then cuts rope.*] There, you are free. Take this and make a dash for liberty [*Hands him a pistol*]—and—forget me.

MAJOR GRAHAM. I will never forget you. You have saved my life twice. Good-bye. But before I go, will you give me that rose? [*Indicates rose which she wears.*]

ROSE [*lifting hand to rose*]. Why?

MAJOR GRAHAM. That I may remember you.

ROSE [*quickly*]. That you may remember me? You just said that you would never forget.

MAJOR GRAHAM [*stammering*]. No! You know I will never forget you. But give it to me as a token of the divine compassion of—of an enemy.

ROSE [*unpinning a small flag from her dress and holding it out to him with the rose*]. Here, I will give you this to remind you of the flag I love.

MAJOR GRAHAM [*taking a step back*]. No, not that! [*Stepping forward as she continues to hold it*

out.] Yes, I will! Even though I fight for the same principles under another flag. I will take it for what it has been in the past, when it was the flag of my fathers.

ROSE [*handing it to him*]. For what it has been, for what it is and for what it shall be in the future —the flag of the Union—the flag of Freedom.

MAJOR GRAHAM [*putting the flag in his breast pocket*]. Good-bye!

ROSE. Good-bye! [*Gives Major Graham her hand which he kisses.*] Good-bye. Go! [*She moves over to L. U. E. and exits slowly. Major Graham moves to R. U. E. looking over shoulder at Rose. Enter Colonel Bartlett R. U. E. They run into each other.*]

MAJOR GRAHAM [*raising pistol presents it to Colonel Bartlett's breast*]. Halt! Out of the way, or you are a dead man.

COLONEL BARTLETT [*coolly*]. What is all this? Lindsay Graham!

MAJOR GRAHAM [*lowering pistol slowly*]. My God! Winthrop Bartlett! That was a close call. I thought you were Crew. I came near—[*Lays pistol*

on table.] I am a prisoner, under sentence as a hostage, and having escaped last night came here by mistake, thinking I had friends here. [*Re-enter Rose who pauses inside L. U. E.*]

COLONEL BARTLETT. So you have, old fellow. You are not a prisoner at all. I have good news— [*Takes out a dispatch. Enter Crew R. U. E. He pulls out a pistol.*]

CREW. What is this? Don't stir or I will shoot. [*Calls.*] Guards, guards.

COLONEL BARTLETT [*stepping in front of him and putting him aside angrily*]. Put that up. [*Enter guards.*]

CREW. Arrest all these people—every one. I have won out. Colonel Bartlett, I have a dispatch from the Provost Marshal of this District authorizing me to make such arrests as I deem proper. Consider yourself under arrest.

COLONEL BARTLETT. I have an order from the Secretary of War placing me in command of this District.

CREW [*astounded*]. You have—what?

COLONEL BARTLETT [*to Major Graham*]. My first

duty is to announce to you that you are free. A courier has come with a dispatch from the President saying that the officer for whom you were held has been sent through the lines. [*Enter Mammy.*] You have been exchanged and are free.

MAMMY. Oh! Thank de Lord! for all his mussies. [*To Crew.*] I's free too—Does you see me?

COLONEL BARTLETT [*to Crew*]. My next duty is to arrest you. Guards, arrest that man. [*Guards advance and arrest Crew.*] I will trouble you for my dispatch which you suppressed.

CREW. What dispatch? This is an outrage. I have no dispatch. I give you my word of honor.

MAMMY. He's got it right in he pocket. I seed him put it dyah.

CREW [*handing dispatch to Colonel Bartlett*]. Damn him! Why didn't I shoot him before? [*He falls back towards door and exits scowling.*]

ROSE. Exchanged! Free! Oh, brother! [*She throws herself in Colonel Bartlett's arms.*]

COLONEL BARTLETT. There, there, little Sis.

Don't cry! [*To Major Graham.*] This is my sister. She has been much interested in your fate.

ROSE [*wiping her eyes*]. I am so glad you are free. I felt like a murderess.

MAJOR GRAHAM [*taking her hand*]. My fate is still in your hands.

COLONEL BARTLETT [*smiling*]. She is a terrible fire-eater. Worse almost than——

ROSE [*putting her hand over his mouth*]. Hush.

COLONEL BARTLETT. She is for conquest.

ROSE. Brother—please hush.

COLONEL BARTLETT. I have other news. Lee has surrendered.

ROSE [*delighted*]. Lee surrendered? Oh, thank God! The war is over.

MAJOR GRAHAM [*agitated*]. Lee surrendered? Impossible! [*Cheering up.*] Oh, you mean one of the younger Lees. I know *Marse Robert* has not surrendered.

MAMMY. Nor; dat he ain't

COLONEL BARTLETT. Yes, he has. [*Takes dispatch from pocket*]. General Lee surrendered his army to General Grant at Appomattox this morning.

MAJOR GRAHAM [*turning and sinking into a chair beside table*]. My God, it is over! The cause is lost. We have no flag now.

ROSE [*lifting flag and throwing it partly over him*]. Yes, we all have one flag now and thank God for it! —The flag of your fathers and of ours.

MAJOR GRAHAM [*kisses her hand and buries his head in his arms on the table.*]

[*Curtain.*]

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